NOV. 21

10¢

Exciting Mysteries

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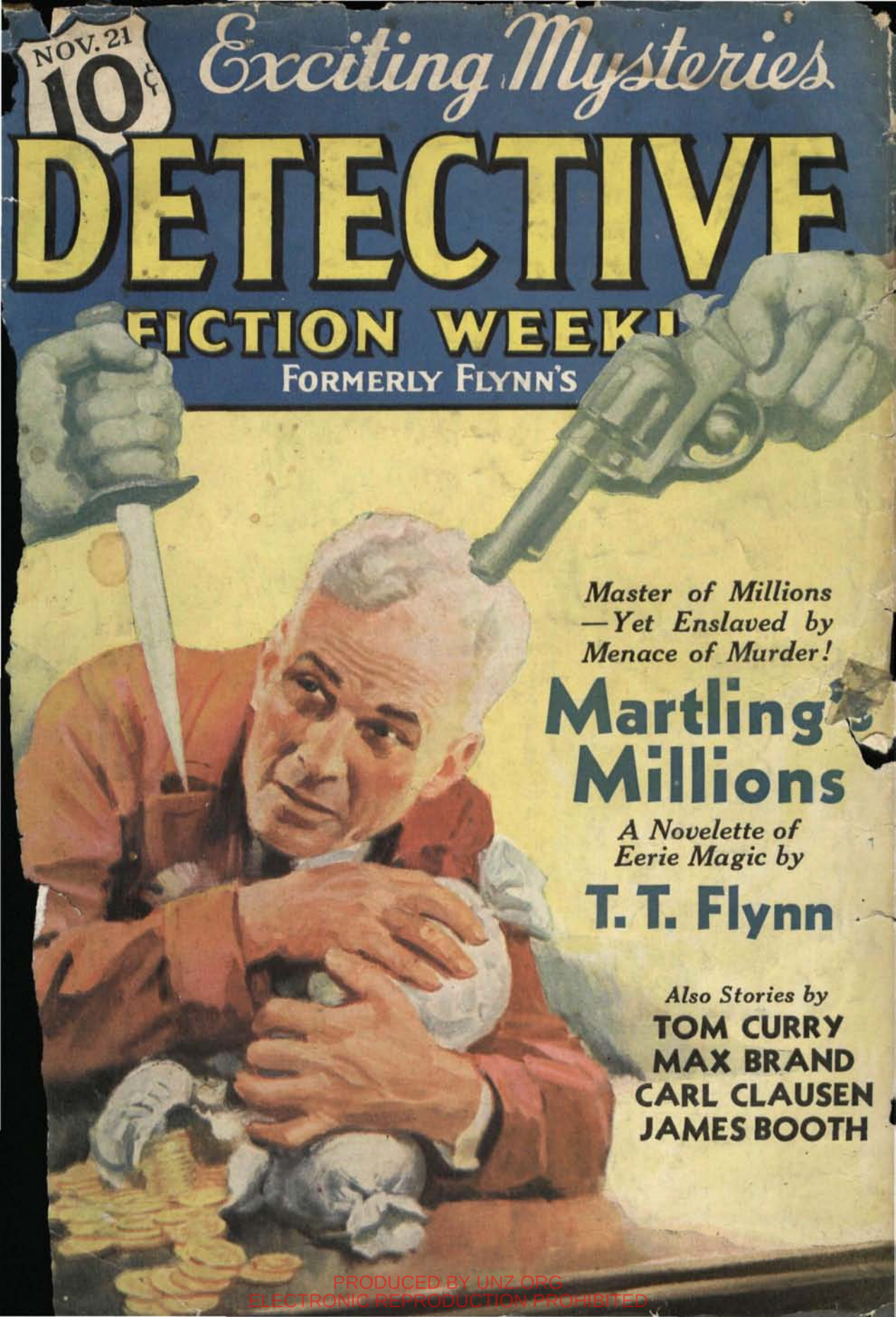

*Master of Millions —Yet Enslaved by Menace of Murder!*

## Martling's Millions

*A Novelette of Eerie Magic by*

**T. T. Flynn**

*Also Stories by*

**TOM CURRY**
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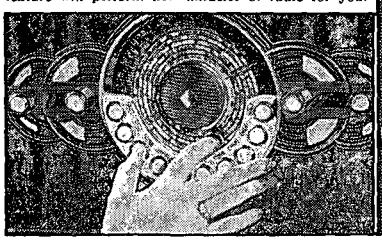

New 1937 AIR-TESTED 5-BAND **16-Tube MIDWEST Radio**

9 to 2200 METERS

## 30 Days FREE Trial!

Send for big FREE 40-page 1937 Midwest catalog — before you buy any radio — and see for yourself why scores of thousands of radio purchasers have saved up to 50% by ordering the Midwest factory-to-you way since 1920. Learn why Midwest radios are preferred by famous movie stars, orchestra leaders, musicians, sound technicians, and discriminating radio purchasers everywhere.

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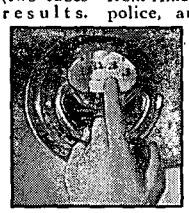

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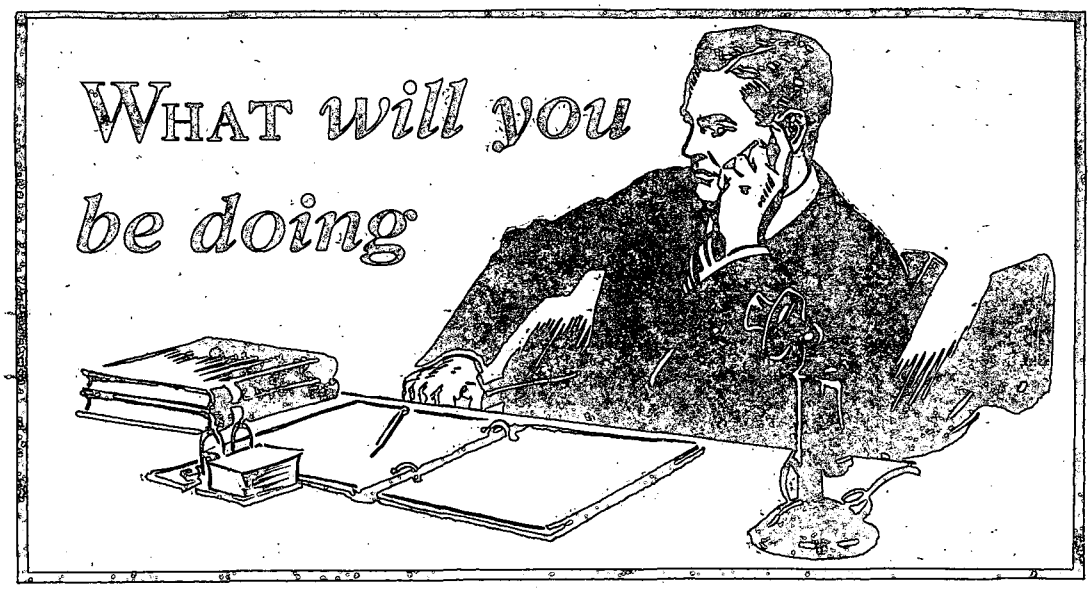


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THREE hundred and sixty-five days from now—what?

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One year from today will you still be putting off your start toward success—thrilled with ambition one moment and then cold the next—delaying, waiting, fiddling away the precious hours that will never come again?

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Make up your mind today that you're going to train yourself to do some one thing well. Choose the work you like best in the list below, mark an X beside it, and without cost or obligation, at least get the full story of what the I.C.S. can do for you.

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THANKS!

N.R.I. TRAINING CERTAINLY PAYS. OUR MONEY WORRIES ARE OVER AND WE'VE A BRIGHT FUTURE AHEAD IN RADIO.
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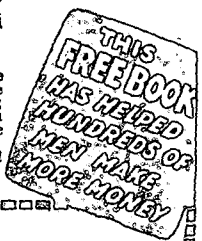
**J. E. SMITH, President, Dept. GMK**
**National Radio Institute, Washington, D. C.**

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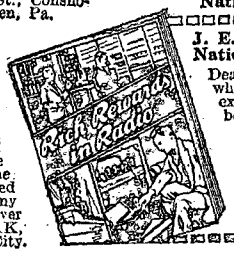


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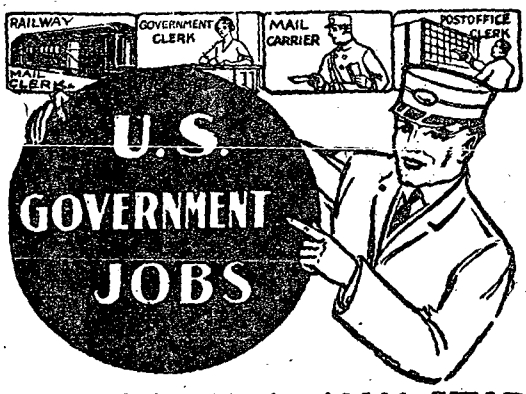


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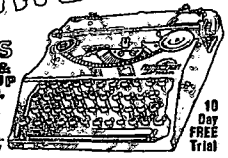

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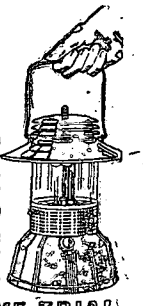

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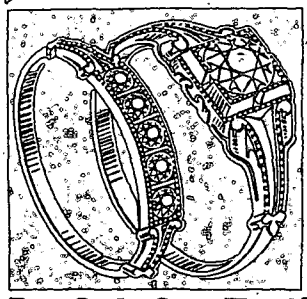

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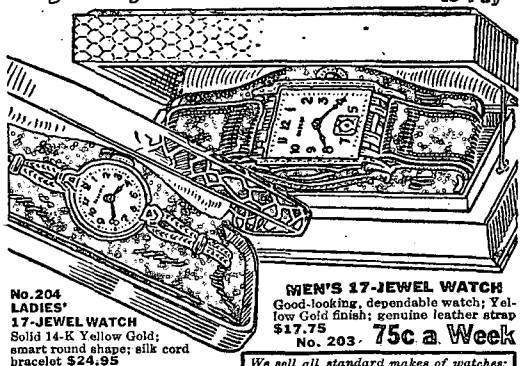

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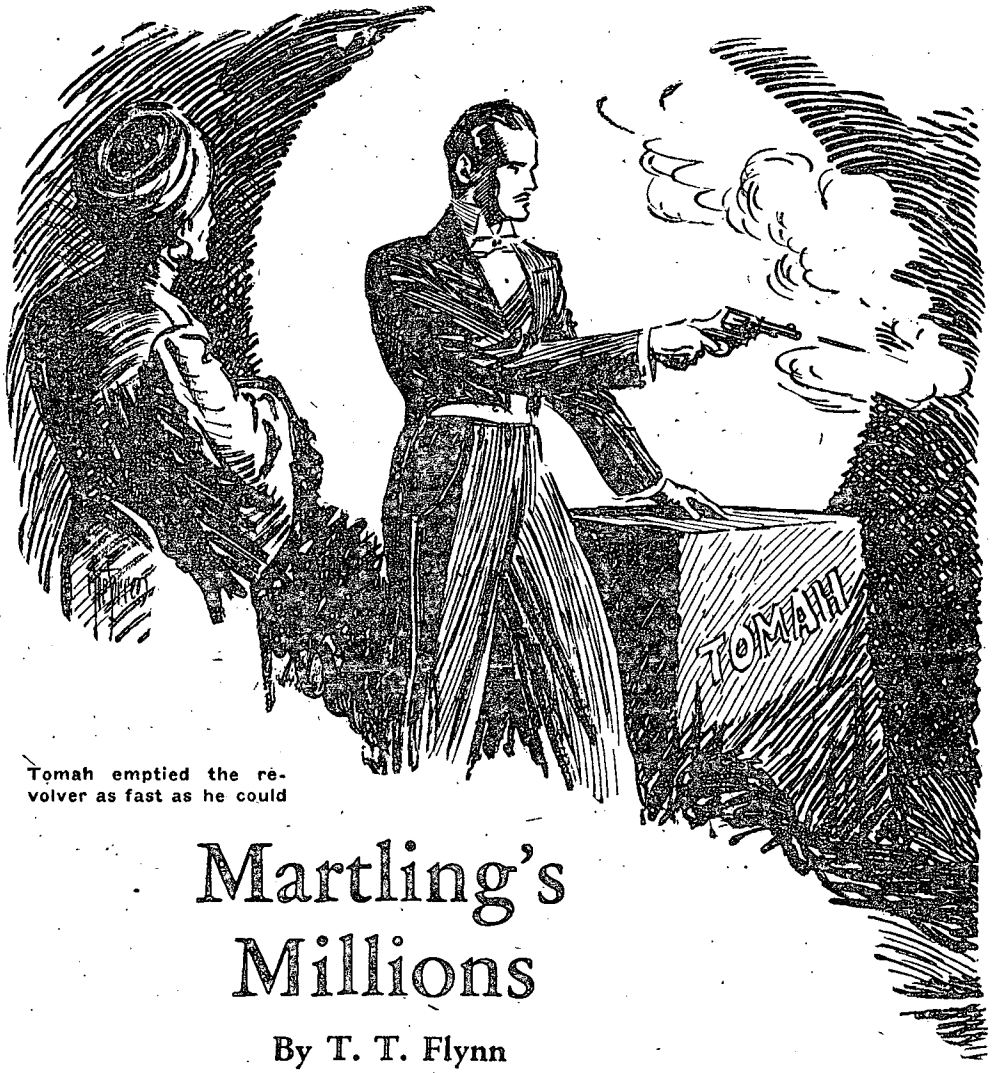


Tomah emptied the revolver as fast as he could

# Martling's Millions

By T. T. Flynn

## CHAPTER I

### A Meeting of the Clan

"THE bullet, gentlemen," said Frederick Martling earnestly, "did not miss my head by half an inch that night. Do you wonder I feel the time has come to ask for protection?

"Asleep or awake, day and night, I carry the knowledge I may die the next minute."

Frederick Martling passed a handkerchief over his plump face. His somewhat glassy-looking eyes anxiously regarded Mayor Boleton and Chief of Police Cranston, of Granada. They were in the Mayor's office. Cranston waited for the Mayor to speak.

Mayor Boleton shook his leonine, white-haired head in sympathy. "It's easy to understand how you feel, Mr. Martling," he declared warmly. "I'm glad you brought this to us. We are



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*Detective Cranston Usually Thrived on Tough Cases; The Martling Murder Was so Unique, However, He Was Forced to Depend upon the Uncertainties of a Modern Black Magic*

Philip collapsed to the floor

here—hrrmmph—first and last to serve our citizens."

Privately Mayor Boleton was wondering if there was any way Martling's visit could be turned to political account. It wasn't every day you had a man worth eight millions begging for help.

In a few months the next campaign would be getting under way. Money would be needed. As far back as the memory of man went, Martling had never contributed a dollar to a campaign chest or evinced any interest in politics. But the right handling of this situation might easily loosen his purse strings.



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Chief Cranston was a good politician himself. Eight million dollars also commanded his respect.

"We'll put a guard on you day and night," he promised readily.

Frederick Martling had a round smiling face. Even when he was not smiling one was apt to get the impression he might do so at any instant. He looked soft and good-natured. Tales had circulated, however, that few harder business men had ever been known in the state.

In a way it was understandable. Martling's millions had come out of the oil game. A man had to be hard and shrewd to come out on top there.

The glassy eyes looked at Cranston.

"I have a guard," Martling said. "He is armed. I am seldom out of his sight. But he is not a detective—and I'm afraid this has gotten beyond the hope of private guards helping me. It is a matter for the police."

Cranston nodded.

"We'll take care of it," he promised.

"I hope so," Frederick Martling said. He leaned forward and tapped fingertips on the Mayor's desk. "There must be no publicity," he warned. "At least not until you make an arrest. Can I count on that?"

Mayor Boleton would have promised anything reasonable in that moment. He was determined to please this possible source of campaign money.

"I think we can keep it quiet," he said. "How about it, Cranston? Can you answer for your department?"

Cranston replied promptly. "If a word leaks out I'll get the head of the one responsible. But there's no use spreading it around any more than we can help. If I can get an idea what's behind all this I'll know who to put on the case. Mr. Martling, have you received any threats?"

Martling shrugged his plump shoulders.

"A man in my position makes enemies and receives threats all the time. It's one of the penalties of wealth. But if you want my opinion, gentlemen, my relatives are where the danger lies. You may as well know it from the first."

The Mayor was startled. So was his chief of police. Cranston was the first to speak. He was blunt.

"That's a remarkable statement, Mr. Martling. Er—do you mean to say you suspect relatives of trying to murder you?"

MARTLING'S glassy eyes stared at the chief. "Why not? I have never married. Most of my relatives are poor. If I die they'll probably split my money up, no matter how I word a will."

Cranston groped for words.

"But—but—have any of them made threats? Have you any reason for your suspicions?"

"I have reasons for everything I do," Martling replied curtly. "I have reasons for this. To try to make them clear now would be bandying words which probably would mean nothing to you. There is a tradition among the Martlings which has been observed for two generations. Each year the clan gathers for a day. They are meeting at my house tonight. If I am killed, I presume it will be while I am with them."

Martling's mouth twisted in a smile. "Killed in the bosom of my family, you might say," he remarked.

The Mayor shifted uneasily in his chair. This matter had suddenly assumed a disconcerting aspect. He was at a loss for words. Frederick Martling was too prominent a figure to

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have his name linked with greedy relatives willing to kill for a share of his fortune.

"Did you have anything in mind, Mr. Martling?" he questioned.

Martling shrugged. "I've told you my fears. The methods I'll leave to you."

Mayor Boleton passed the buck with a neatness born of long practice.

"Cranston," he suggested, "why don't you take this matter in hand yourself? You can leave your duties for a day or so. I know of no better man fitted for the job." Boleton looked his chief of police squarely in the eye. "We want to do everything we can for a distinguished citizen like Mr. Martling," he said gravely.

"Exactly the thing I was thinking," Cranston agreed quickly.

Frederick Martling stood up and smiled at them. "It gives me pleasure to see you so willing to help me, gentlemen. Cranston, if you will drop by my office about four, with a bag, I'll run you out to the house in my car and introduce you as a business friend whom I'm putting up. We're having a big dinner tonight and an entertainment afterward. Tomah, the magician, who has been appearing at a local theater the last few days, is giving his performance at the house. His wife is one of my relatives."

Frederick Martling lived in a manner perhaps too ostentatious for one who had come up from comparative poverty and had never married. His house was one of the largest, most luxurious in Granada. It occupied an entire city block in a section where land values were high. The staff of servants alone was a heavy drain.

There was perhaps some excuse for the house. It had been built by a man on whose ranch oil had been found. In the first flush of his new millions the man had spread himself. But he had been wise enough to leave the details to a competent architect. The result was luxury and good taste such as only unlimited money could have bought.

But the owner had not long enjoyed his new house. He had plunged recklessly back into the oil game. When the dust of activity had cleared away, Frederick Martling owned the man's new wealth, including the costly home. There was no sale for the place, so Martling occupied it.

TONIGHT, however, the entire house was needed, and more. The Martlings were a prolific clan. When Cranston entered the house he started shaking hands. After the first dozen he gave up trying to remember the degrees of relationship and names which went with them.

If any of Martling's relatives possessed wealth, Cranston was unable to detect it. Studying them, passing casual remarks as he moved about before dinner, Cranston presently became aware of a queer feeling.

Something was present under the surface which he could not define. There was laughter, chatter, talk, family gossip. But also there was something else. Through an occasional rift an ugly note of discontent appeared to crop out.

More than once Cranston noted looks directed at Frederick Martling which were anything but friendly. As a whole the relatives seemed to get along. But by the same token many of them seemed to have little use for Martling.

Cranston grew slightly irritated at his failure to note any specific thing. But it was there. He became increasingly watchful for those who visibly displayed their dislike of Martling.

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Guests continued to arrive. Among them was Tomah, the magician, whose show Cranston had witnessed two nights befre.

A few minutes later Martling came to Cranston.

"I want you to meet the magician," he said. "His real name is John Hopkins. He married my oldest brother's daughter a year and a half ago. I understand he is very successful on the stage."

John Hopkins had come with his wife and another young man. The trio was still together when Martling made the introduction.

Hopkins had in interesting personality on and off the stage. He was about thirty-five, Cranston judged. The long mobile face had a ready smile. But a faint reserve settled on Hopkins as soon as Frederick Martling appeared. The coolness included Cranston, although Hopkins shook hands readily enough.

The magician's glance rested on Cranston's face for a moment. The eyes were dark, deep, piercing, almost hypnotic. Cranston had the sudden feeling that here was a man whose knowledge was wide, deep, and inclusive of many things the ordinary person was not aware of.

"Your face is very familiar, Mr. Cranston," Hopkins observed.

Cranston joked with a sober face. "Some people tell me I look like the town's chief of police," he said. "Our names are the same also."

Hopkins shook his head. "I've never seen the gentleman."

"I saw your show."

"Probably that," Hopkins agreed. "Sometimes faces in the audience stay in my memory."

Mrs. Hopkins was a small, dark, demure girl in her middle twenties. Tonight, it seemed to Cranston, she was subdued, uneasy.

"Looks like something's on her mind," Cranston said to himself, and turned his attention to the third one of the trio. Philip Martling was his name. His facial likeness to Hopkins' wife marked him as a brother.

But there the resemblance ended. Philip Martling was a stocky, dark, intense young man, who was plainly out of humor tonight, with Martling it seemed. Young Martling frankly scowled at the older man. And because Cranston was a friend he received little more than a curt nod and a grunt from Philip Martling.

"If all the relatives are like you, my boy," Cranston thought, "no wonder Martling is afraid."

Nothing was said to indicate what was on young Martling's mind. The group broke up a moment later. Cranston kept his eye on the trio.

JOHN HOPKINS was a center of attraction. Many of the relatives he had apparently met before. He was pleasant to all, with an easy courtesy probably perfected by years of travel among strangers. Even at a distance the man's hands fascinated Cranston. They were slim, supple and sure of movement even in casual use. On the stage working magic they were marvels of dexterity.

Presently Cranston noted Mrs. Hopkins talking earnestly to her husband and brother over in one corner of the big drawing room. She seemed to be pleading. The brother was talking vehemently. Hopkins' pleasantry was gone. He was frowning.

Cranston had one bit of knowledge which had stood him in good stead more than once. He was a lip reader and had perfected his ability as

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much as possible. Now, from across the drawing room, without appearing to be aware of the little tableau, Cranston picked snatches of the conversation off the lips of husband and wife. The brother's head was turned so his mouth was not visible.

Mrs. Hopkins said: "No! You mustn't, Harry!"

"I've been waiting for this chance," Hopkins replied to her.

She put a hand on her husband's arm, obviously pleading. "Please—for my sake, Harry! Not here tonight!"

Hopkins shifted his position. His face was no longer visible either. But Cranston saw the magician's head give an insistent nod. Mrs. Hopkins sighed and turned away, obviously deeply troubled.

## CHAPTER II

### Death Magic

CRANSTON was gripped with a mounting grimness. He had come to the house in a tolerant mood, prepared to humor the vagaries of Frederick Martling as far as possible. Privately he had been inclined to smile at Martling's fear of the relatives. Mayor Boleton had felt the same way.

The two shots Martling claimed had been fired at him on two different nights might have been the work of anyone. Martling's failure to state any definite grounds for suspicion of his relatives had borne that out.

During the drive out from Martling's office, Cranston had informed his host that two detectives were to be stationed outside the house all night. They would command windows and doors.

Martling had been pleased at the idea. Cranston had not felt then that anyone other than himself was needed inside the house. Now he was not so sure. The fact increased his irritation.

Cranston possessed a bit more imagination than a man in his position usually had. He had worked up from the bottom on the Granada police force. Politics had helped him, but he had tried to fit himself for the work as much as possible. Early he had discovered in himself a flair for crime detection. In sixteen years there had not been a murder or major case of crime in the city which he had not had a part in solving. The record was enviable, and Cranston wanted to keep it so. But now he found himself increasingly nettled by the circumstances in which he found himself.

No crime had been committed here. There was nothing he could put his finger on to warrant definite action. Yet the feeling persisted that something was going on under the surface and should be headed off.

Dinner was served in a large, elaborate dining room. A great table extended the length of the room. No children were present. They were being fed in another part of the house. More than sixty adults sat around the big table. Martling's servants were being helped by caterer's assistants.

Martling, in a dinner coat, presided benignly at the head of the table. He smiled constantly, talked freely. He was the genial, affable host—yet his glassy stare turned now and then to Cranston as if to warn that pleasure and good-fellowship were not all the house held.

Grape juice, instead of wine, was served. For the most part these were not wine drinking people. In the middle of the meal Martling stood up and lifted his glass. Silence fell over the table.

Smiling, their host gave them a toast

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which drew a faint chill up Cranston's back.

"This is the first time you have all gathered under my roof," Martling told them. "It is delightful to have you here. I want to drink to those of you who wish me well."

Still smiling, Martling drained his glass.

A few of the guests who had been prepared to follow suit awkwardly drank also. Others put their glasses down. The silence drew out to an uncomfortable length as Martling deliberately put his empty glass beside his plate and slowly sat down.

The magician's demure little wife broke the silence. Jumping to her feet, she lifted her glass.

"I think Uncle Frederick has a toast coming!" she cried. "Let's drink to him—and to all the luck he deserves!"

Cranston was unable to tell just what emotion swayed her.

But the others seemed to know. A young woman giggled shrilly, a man laughed harshly, Frederick Martling's health was drunk. And the meal went on.

A peculiar people, these Martlings, Cranston thought. His feeling grew that beneath the surface of this family gathering queer passions lurked.

BUT the meal drew to an end with no more awkward incidents. When dessert was over, Frederick Martling got to his feet. Silence fell over the table again. Smiling down the length of the table, Martling said:

"It is our good fortune to have extraordinary talent with us this year. We all know and like Jothn Hopkins, who had the good taste to marry my brother Richard's daughter, Lora. John arranged his bookings to be with us tonight. Some of us have seen his show, but a great many of us have not. John is going to entertain us tonight in the music room with an exhibition of his remarkable magic. I'm sure we're all going to enjoy it."

Enthusiastic handclapping followed.

John Hopkins stood at his place midway of the table and bowed.

"I'm happy to be here tonight," he said, smiling. "For the benefit of those who do not know, my magic is trickery. No matter what happens during the performance, please keep your seats and don't be afraid." Smiling, Hopkins glanced about the table. "I'm going to try to surprise you," he promised.

Laughter and more handclapping greeted that.

A weatherbeaten old gentleman with a gray beard who looked like—and probably was—a small rancher, called out: "We'll be watchin' you, John. If you can fool my wife here, you're good. I've been tryin' to do it ever since we were married an' never got by with it yet." Again laughter swept the table.

"I haven't been bold enough to try to fool my wife yet," John Hopkins chuckled. Hopkins and his wife left the table.

Philip Martling remained, nervously toying with a demi-tasse spoon. Cranston had watched the youth during the meal. Young Martling had not smiled once. Several times he had scowled toward the head of the table where Frederick Martling sat.

"I wonder if he's the bird who fired those shots at Martling?" Cranston asked himself. "Must check up on him those nights."

Hard on the heels of that Cranston wondered if the young man were armed. As the meal broke up and the company moved toward the music room Cranston maneuvered behind the young

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man. He stumbled slightly, saved himself from falling by catching at Martling. His awkward hands slid over Martling's torso.

"Sorry," Cranston apologized.

Philip Martling wheeled around with a quick scowl. He stared suspiciously, checked a hasty remark, and nodded.

They entered the music room at that moment. Cranston lowered his voice:

"You kind of surprised me then, young man. This is a funny place to be carrying a gun, ain't it? Especially a young man like yourself."

Philip Martling abruptly stepped to one side, so those behind could pass. Cranston stepped over with him. The young man's manner was belligerent as he charged: "I thought that stumble was faked! You did it to get your hands on me. What's the idea?"

Little lines of humor appeared at Cranston's eyes. He looked down at young Martling and chuckled.

"Son," Cranston said, "you're pretty smart, aren't you? Not many folks would 'a' guessed that. Now why would you figure I'd want to see if you had a gun?"

"The old man put you up to it, of course!"

"That's a funny guess. Why would he want to do that?"

Young Martling glowered. "If you don't know, I'm not going to tell you!" he snapped. "You're asking too many questions. I didn't come here tonight to be pumped." Young Martling started to turn away.

Cranston put out a hand and stopped him. "Just why did you come here tonight, son?"

Philip Martling shook the hand off. "I don't know why I came!" he burst out ill-humoredly. "For the love of Mike, stay away from me! I don't feel like talking!"

CRANSTON watched the young man make his way toward the front of the room. A baffling sense of mystery was taking hold of him. On a sudden impulse Cranston looked about, saw Frederick Martling across the room talking to several people and went to him. A jerk of his head drew Martling off to one side.

"Did you know that young nephew of yours is carrying a gun in his hip pocket?" Cranston asked the multi-millionaire.

Martling was startled.

"I had no idea," he replied. "How did you discover that?"

"Felt his pocket," Cranston said dryly.

Martling wet his lips, smiled doubtfully. "I suppose it's all right," he said. "I'm in no danger from the boy, I'm sure."

"He doesn't seem to have much use for you. I've seen him give you some dirty looks this evening."

Martling smiled at that. "I'm afraid he may have done that—but it doesn't mean anything. He's having some trouble with his sister's husband."

"The magician?"

"Yes," Martling shook his head ruefully. "They're quarreling over some land Philip and his sister own. It may have oil on it. I've offered to buy. Hopkins wants to sell and Lora is agreeable. Philip has flatly refused—and his signature is necessary. They've been trying to change his mind." Martling shrugged. "I don't know all that's been said, of course. Threats may have been made. But I don't think you need to watch Philip on my account."

Cranston was still troubled. "He looks like a headstrong young fellow to me. He's got no business with a gun that way. I reckon I'd better take it away from him."

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Martling sighed. "I wish you wouldn't, Cranston," he said frankly. "There'll be a scene if you do. The evening will be ruined. Let him keep it. I'll stay near him and make sure everything is all right."

Cranston agreed dubiously. "But something tells me I'm not doing right," he said. "That young man looks like he's heading for trouble."

"I'll sit behind him and keep an eye on him," Martling stated.

Cranston yielded with an uneasy feeling that he was doing the wrong thing. His attention, however, was taken off the matter by preparations for the show.

The music room was, in reality, a small private theater, equipped to show moving pictures. A stage had been built at one end of the room complete with curtains and footlights. The seats were portable metal chairs.

The room was noisy with talk, laughter, confused movement as the guests found seats. Children added their quota of noise.

WHEN all were seated the lights went off. The audience quieted. Spotlights from the projection booth at the back of the room focused on the red velvet stage curtains as they moved apart.

Tomah, the magician, in full dress, stood there on the stage nonchalantly cascading a deck of playing cards from hand to hand.

Cranston had seen it once, but he was still interested. Impossible, it seemed, for anyone to make cards become so alive. Those marvelously agile hands moved with uncanny sureness and rapidity. Cards appeared, disappeared from all parts of Tomah's person.

"What a poker player that fellow'd make!" Cranston said to himself.

The cards vanished. Tomah began to pluck objects out of the air. Handkerchiefs appeared and took life in the supple hands. Small balls rolled around the hands and vanished at the finger tips. A startled white rabbit hopped off the stage when it was released. Tomah plucked a canary out of space and let it fly into the wings.

Some of these preliminary tricks had been used on the local stage, some were new. It didn't matter. The children were entranced. The elders hung on every move.

Tomah had brought part of his stage apparatus and his three Oriental assistants. More elaborate tricks followed.

An assistant set a small flower pot on the stage. Another filled it with loose dirt. Tomah impressively planted a small green shoot in the dirt and covered it with a silk cloth. A few moments later, when he removed the cloth, the shoot had grown quite a bit. He spread the cloth again, and when he removed it a second time the bush was taller and had put out leaves. Twice more Tomah covered the plant—and finally displayed a sizable bush covered with scarlet flowers.

The magician kept up a swift patter of monologue as he worked, wording it in a somewhat more familiar vein for the benefit of these relatives of his wife.

Two assistants brought a wicker hamper to the middle of the stage. Lora, slender and extraordinarily pretty in full-length tights of silver and gold, ran out on the stage and bowed.

Tomah scowled at her and spoke viciously to the audience.

"Since we've been married I've wanted to try something. Watch, my friends, and see if I can do it."

He caught the shrinking girl, swung

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her up and into the hamper, shoved her down roughly and fastened the lid. A long gleaming sword came whirling through the air. Tomah caught it deftly.

Inside the hamper Lora was crying loudly to be released.

Tomah whirled the sword around his head, and then, with a mighty stab, plunged the glinting blade through the front of the hamper.

A woman in the audience uttered a startled scream. But her cry was mild compared to the shriek of agony which issued from the hamper.

Tomah drew out the blade. It was wet with fresh blood. Ignoring further cries from the audience and the shrieks of his wife inside the hamper, he drove the sword through the wicker work again and again.

Lora's shrieks died away to silence.

A woman on the far side of the audience wailed: "Oh, my God, if he does that again, I'll faint!"

Tomah opened the basket and jumped inside, trampling the prostrate form within.

Another woman begged the man beside her: "*Ed, make him stop that!*"

Tomah stepped out of the hamper—and, with a flourish, tipped it forward. The spotlight illuminated the inside clearly. Lora was not in there.

IN the general gasp which rippled over the audience, Lora skipped out from the wings, laughing and unhurt. The outburst of relief and enthusiasm which followed stopped the show for minutes. A man called: "John, how'd you do that?"

"The magic secrets of old India," Tomah intoned solemnly. "And now, ladies and gentlemen, will some of you use the steps at the side of the stage there? Come up and assure everyone in the audience that this revolver is loaded. Several of you may come."

It took a bit more coaxing before two men and a woman, amid general laughter, went up on the stage and examined the revolver.

One of the men was the elderly rancher who had spoken as Hopkins left the dinner table. He ejected two of the shells from the gun, examined them critically, gave his conclusion to the audience:

"If they ain't loaded, I don't know guns—an' I've had 'em around all my life. How about it, Sam?'

The other man nodded agreement.

Tomah waved them to one side.

"I seem to have failed with the sword," he told the audience.

"I'll try again—*this way!*"

Lora was standing before the footlights, with her back to the audience. Before anyone knew what was happening, Tomah leveled the revolver point-blank at her—and at the audience—and emptied it as fast as he could pull the trigger.

The explosions crashed deafeningly in the confined space. Again women screamed. Children were frightened. Someone in the front row leaped up. Lora sank to the stage, clearly a wounded, dying creature.

Tomah nonchalantly tossed his gun to an assistant in the wings and stepped to her.

The spotlight outlined each move clearly. Tomah reached down to her shoulder — and plucked forth one of the bullets between thumb and forefinger so all could see. He tossed it on the stage. In the sudden silence the harp rap of the lead bullet against the board floor could be heard.

Swiftly Tomah plucked the other bullets from different parts of his wife's body, made a pass with his hand

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over her, lifted her to her feet—and she was laughing and alive again.

This was a trick Tomah had not used in his local stage show. Cranston, standing by the left wall of the room, midway back, joined in the applause. The man had showmanship and skill.

From the front row of chairs a woman's horrified scream rang through the room. The cry was so genuine, so piercing that the audience froze in their seats. Even Tomah and his assistants on the stage turned quickly to see what was the matter.

## CHAPTER III

### Hopkins Refuses to Explain

THE woman wailed: "He's bleeding! It's on my hand! He's dead!" Swearing under his breath, Cranston leaped toward the spot. His hunch had been right after all. Tragedy had struck before his eyes.

Chairs were jostling, falling as people surged to their feet. Tomah ran to the footlights, waving his arms.

"*Sit still, everyone!*" he cried. "*Didn't I tell you it was all trickery? Turn on the lights.*"

His words stopped the rising panic. But Cranston, knocking several people aside as he plowed across the front row, knew there was no trickery about that woman's scream. Tomah's last stunt had been brought to a triumphant close before the woman let go. Her words didn't fit into the act anyway. They were too genuine.

"Someone got Martling while everyone was watching the stage," Cranston thought grimly.

The lights came on as Cranston reached the middle of the front aisle. Martling, very much alive, was there before him, bending over a body. Past Martling's shoulder, Cranston saw with bewilderment that the man who lay on the floor was young Philip Martling.

Then Cranston remembered the figure which had leaped up at this spot as the shots were fired. Like everyone else, Cranston had waited with his mouth open and his attention on the stage while young Martling had been murdered before their eyes.

And it was murder. Cranston had no doubt of that as he snapped at Martling, who was clumsily pawing the body.

"Let him alone!" Cranston ordered.

Young Philip Martling lay on his side, face turned up, hands pressed to his chest. His coat was open in front. Blood was oozing from under his hands.

The wound was over the heart. Death must have come almost instantly.

The news spread swiftly through the room. But the first fear had passed. The growing confusion now held no danger of panic.

Martling was stuttering in his excitement.

"I d-don't know what happened!" he exclaimed to Cranston. "I s-saw him jump up and fall—b-but I thought it was part of the show! Is that b-blood? Is he really dead?'

"Don't ask questions!" Cranston snapped at him. "Telephone police headquarters and report this, and then run out front and tell my men to come in here. They'll be out there somewhere."

Standing, Cranston raised his arms and shouted so everyone could hear.

"Be quiet! I'm Cranston, the Chief of Police!" And when a measure of order followed, Cranston said: "Get the children out of here. Their mothers can go with them. The rest of you remain. Take your seats and be quiet!"

Tomah, the magician, had reverted



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to plain John Hopkins—a pale, worried John Hopkins as he appeared at Cranston's elbow.

"Is he really dead?" Hopkins asked, looking down at the body.

"A doctor will be here in a few minutes," Cranston replied curtly. "But I guess he's as dead as he'll ever be. I want that gun you fired."

Lora Hopkins, wearing a dressing gown over her gold and silver tights, had followed her husband down off the stage. She heard the words. A moan of grief burst from her as she dropped to her knees beside her dead brother.

"It isn't so! I don't believe it!" she cried hysterically.

Hopkins lifted her up and held her, trying to comfort her. His face was bitter as he looked at Cranston.

"My gun should be in the property trunk by now," he said. "But if you think that gun, or I, had anything to do with this, you're mad. There wasn't a chance of that trick going wrong."

Cranston shrugged. It was all he could do at the moment.

"You'd better let some of the women take your wife away," he advised. "I won't need her right now. You stay here. Don't go near your gun. That's a police order."

Hopkins gave him an angry look. "If you think I can't be trusted, say so!" Cranston did not answer.

ORDERING those nearby to keep away from the body, Cranston ran up on the stage where Hopkins' assistants were standing. Their dark Oriental faces were devoid of emotion.

"Which one of you caught that revolver when Hopkins tossed it in the wings?" Cranston barked at them. They regarded him in stolid silence.

"If you birds don't want a taste of jail, snap out of it and talk!" Cranston warned roughly. "And don't give me any 'no savee.'"

Beyond the footlights Hopkins heard and turned as he was leading his wife away.

"Tell him anything he wants to know," Hopkins ordered his men.

But his three assistants were still reluctant to speak. Muttered words in their native tongue passed between them. They drew closer together, facing Cranston with sullen wariness. Like cattle in the face of danger, he thought.

The tallest of the three, a lean, brown-skinned man who looked like a native of India, and might have been from any part of that section of the world, spoke. "I catch gun. What you want?"

"Where is the gun?"

"In trunk."

"Take me to it."

Silently the man stalked off the stage into a small dressing room crowded with clothes and paraphernalia. Three stout theatrical trunks stood against the walls with lids up. From the top tray of one trunk Cranston's companion took a revolver.

Cranston examined the plain, thirty-eight caliber weapon. The empty shells were still in the cylinder. A rank smell of burned powder was still strong about it.

"Where are the spare cartridges?" Cranston asked.

"I don't know." The man's black eyes were bright and rebellious. He stood stiffly, lips pressed tightly together.

It would be a waste of time to try to make him talk, Cranston decided.

"Get back on the stage and keep out of this room," Cranston ordered. Pocketing the gun, he followed the man out.



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Part of the audience was seated again. The rest were standing about in uneasy, low-voiced groups. Hopkins was returning from the main doorway, where he had evidently left his wife.

Stopping on the stage at the point where the magician had been standing, when he fired the shots, Cranston went over the scene in his mind. There at the footlights, directly before him, Hopkins' wife had been standing with her back to the audience. The stage was low. Just beyond where she had stood, and not so much lower, was the first row of chairs.

The body lay to the right of her position. It would have been the simplest thing in the world to put one shot a bit to the right, square in Philip Martling's heart.

Marvelous shooting of course, but far from impossible for a crack shot who knew what he was doing.

Hopkins walked up on the stage, pale, bitter, challenging.

"Well?" he said.

Cranston surveyed him deliberately, thinking over what Martling had told him. Studying the man before him, he spoke quietly.

"Do you know anything about this?"

"Not a thing," Hopkins denied emphatically.

"What happened to the bullets in your gun? They were in it when you fired, weren't they?"

"I'LL not explain that trick," Hopkins said stiffly. "We don't divulge our secrets to outsiders. Let me assure you, however, that no bullet from my gun hit that boy. In the first place, the muzzle was pointing full at my wife all the time. In the second place, I wouldn't have pointed the gun at the audience if there had been any danger."

"Nevertheless he was killed while you were shooting."

"I'm not disputing that," Hopkins said curtly.

"He was sitting in the front row and was shot through the heart. You were the only one facing him."

Hopkins answered angrily. "I didn't do it! Nor do I know who did it! My own wife's brother! Preposterous!"

"No more so than for a woman to kill her husband. I'm afraid you're in a bad position, Hopkins. Take one of those chairs in the front row and see if you can't think of something more logical when I'm ready to talk to you."

Cranston had spotted his two men hurrying in. He moved down off the stage and met them in the side aisle. They were alert, capable men.

"We've got a sweet mess here," Cranston told them frankly. "It may be tougher than it looks. Did anything happen outside that might have a bearing on it?"

Hammerly, who had been doing good detective work for years, spoke for them both:

"We both heard the shots, Chief, and covered all four sides of the house with our flashlights until you sent for us. Nothing happened outside."

Cranston nodded rather glumly.

"I hardly expected it," he admitted. "It's an inside job. And, just between us, too damn open and clearcut to satisfy me. Wallett, take down the names of everyone who was sitting in the first three rows, and anything they have to say about it. Hammerly, take this gun to headquarters, have Charley Peters come there at once, fire some bullets from it and get them ready for comparison with the bullet out of the body. Where's Martling, who went out after you?"

"He ran back in the house talking

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to himself," Wallett said. "He was in a lather. Here he comes now."

Martling hurried up. His face was flushed, his glassy stare more pronounced. Cranston sniffed audibly.

Sheepishly Martling said: "I'm pretty upset. I thought a good drink would steady me. Er—you see, I was sitting beside Philip. I saw him jump up and fall and thought it was part of the stage trick. I—I can't get over it."

"Don't drink any more. I want your mind functioning," Cranston told him. "Sit down there in the front row beside Hopkins."

"Right there by the body, Cranston?"

"It won't hurt you. See if you can get Hopkins to talk. He won't to me."

Martling nodded understandingly. "I'll see what I can do," he promised, moving off.

The headquarters men arrived a few moments later. Directly after them came Dr. Simms, the coroner, and Carl Sommers, the District Attorney. Granada had no separate head of detectives. Dan Bailey, ranking as a lieutenant, functioned as the routine head. He came with the men from headquarters.

Twenty minutes of efficient work, which satisfied even Cranston's critical eye, failed to accomplish much.

PHILIP MARTLING had been shot through the heart from the front. The bullet apparently had ranged slightly downward, as if fired from a point higher than the row of chairs where young Martling had been seated. From some point on the stage undoubtedly, the coroner stated.

No one in the audience was able to throw any light on the death. It was understandable. Like Cranston himself, everyone's attention had been on the stage. Their ears had been filled with the rapid reports of Hopkins' revolver. Their nerves had been jolted by the shots fired directly at them. Their eyes had been partially blinded by staring at the bright spotlight on the stage.

The few who had seen Philip Martling leap up in the semi-darkness below the footlights had paid little attention to it. Hadn't Hopkins himself assured them that everything would be trickery? They had been shocked and fooled by the basket trick and had supposed all that followed was the same.

One of the first things Cranston had done was to get the weapon out of Philip Martling's hip pocket. It was a small, twenty-five caliber automatic, and had not been fired. No chance of suicide then. To further complicate matters, there wasn't even a clip in the gun. It couldn't have been fired.

"I'm beginning to think there's no sense to any of this," Cranston growled to Dan Bailey as he handed over the weapon.

Bailey answered succinctly. "Doesn't have to be any sense to murder as long as it's been done. But when we get to the bottom of this, I guess there'll be plenty of sense."

"If we get to the bottom of it," Cranston grunted.

A few moments later Martling reported that Hopkins had refused to discuss the death with him. And when Cranston went to Hopkins he found a defiant, belligerent man.

"You may as well save your breath!" Hopkins said. "I know my rights. I'll not say anything until I see a lawyer. And if you think a touch of third degree will change my mind, I dare you to try it. It'll be the sorriest mistake you ever made."

"You've been reading fiction stories," Cranston said dryly. "You're welcome to any lawyer you can afford

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to pay. But I'm going to hold you on suspicion of murder."

"How about my professional engagements?" Hopkins demanded angrily. "I'm booked solid for weeks!"

"Better un-book," Cranston advised calmly. "And I'm sorry to tell you that, much as I pity your wife, I'll have to question her pretty strictly. I'll be as easy as I can." Cranston paused, suggested: "If you can throw any light on this, it'd probably save her a lot."

Hopkins' face was pale and drawn as he stared back. He swallowed—and then with white-lipped fury, warned: "Get rough with her, you small town Sherlock, and I'll come after you with my bare hands, or anything else that's needed, as soon as I'm free! She has enough grief without you bullying her to make me admit things I know nothing about!"

"Mister," said Cranston slowly, "I don't bully women. All I want is the truth. If neither of you will talk, you must have something to hide. I'll get it sooner or later."

## CHAPTER IV

### Phil's Girl Friend

CRANSTON was not a man who angered easily. But a determination to break the case grew as he found himself stopped time after time.

Mrs. Hopkins was prostrated. Dr. Leander Halethorpe, by all odds Granada's outstanding medical man, called, saw her, and forbade Cranston or his men admittance to her room.

"Other women have had shocks worse than this without collapsing. That woman is no drooping violet. A few questions aren't going to hurt her," Cranston protested.

Dr. Halethorpe was a wiry, dynamic man with a bristling red Van Dyke. His manner was curt, positive.

"I absolutely forbid her examination at this time, Mr. Cranston. We'll go to any length the law allows to prevent it."

"Don't wave the law in my face," Cranston growled. "Who called you on this case?"

"Mr. Martling is concerned about his niece's condition," Dr. Halethorpe said stiffly. "He has given me *carte blanche*. A nurse is with Mrs. Hopkins now."

"Put a dozen nurses with her," Cranston grunted. "She's under technical arrest as a material witness. I'll put a man at her door to check on visitors. Going to leave her in the house here?"

"Probably," Halethorpe decided.

That took one of Cranston's best bets away. Then Dan Bailey and his detectives had their troubles with the relatives. Bailey was frankly harassed when he said:

"Not a damn one seems to know anything. I'm beginning to get an idea they're covering something up."

"I'm sure of it," Cranston agreed promptly. "But don't tell me they wanted young Martling killed. Don't tell me any of them are trying to protect the killer. We'd get a break on that."

"What about all this feeling under the surface earlier in the evening, like you say?" Bailey demanded. "Why can't we get a rise out of them now? I tell you, it ain't natural for them to clam up like a bunch of crooks. They're good citizens. Tell me why they won't talk?"

All Cranston could say was: "I'm not a mind reader."

The body was rushed to the morgue.

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Cranston had Hopkins' trunks and stage apparatus shifted to the property room at headquarters. Reporters were dogging every move. A murder like this screamed for publicity. Granada supported two flourishing papers. Enough pictures were taken, enough questions asked, to fill half a dozen papers.

Even Mayor Boleton rushed out to the house. His Honor posed for flash-light photographs on the front steps, gave his official assurances everything would quickly be cleared up, and then hastened in to repeat them to Martling. After that Cranston got the full shock of official displeasure.

"We're in a damnable corner with this occurring right under your nose, Cranston," Boleton snapped. "I want it cleared up quickly before we lose votes over it."

"Damn the votes!" Cranston replied bluntly. "It's just another homicide to me now. I'm doing all I can to crack it."

Boleton smoothed his white hair and looked very leonine and reassuring—if anyone happened to be looking. But all he could say was, "Make Martling realize you're doing everything possible. You understand why you were here at the house in the first place."

Cranston muttered an assent, and privately damned the day he had ever mixed in politics.

THE coroner got the death bullet to headquarters quickly. When Cranston hurried back to his office, a hasty preliminary comparison of the bullets had just been made. Peters, the ballistics man, had a reputation for being thorough, keen. Cranston looked hopeful when Peters came in and put two bullets on the desk blotter.

"How'd they turn out?" Cranston asked.

Peters pointed to the lead pellets with a finger.

"This one on the left killed him, Chief. The other is my check from the gun you sent in. They don't match."

Startled, Cranston bent over the bullets. "You must be wrong!" he protested. "Hell, man, they've got to match. Made a mistake, haven't you?"

"Not a chance," Peters replied firmly. "A more careful test will only make it more apparent. The bullet that killed him is from the same make of gun you sent in—but from a different gun. I'm positive."

Cranston chewed his lower lip and scowled.

"All right," he agreed abruptly. "Take 'em away; I've got to start all over. I'd have bet my pension they'd match. Hell's bells! What a mess!"

The moves which had been made on behalf of Hopkins completed the ruin of Cranston's peace of mind. Judge Blodgett, conceded the most formidable legal talent in the state, had been retained at once. And Martling himself appeared at headquarters with Acting Judge Cameron, prepared for bail of any amount on Judge Cameron's order. The ballistic findings about the bullet had scuttled for the time being any tight case against the prisoner.

Cranston was not polite to Martling about it. "I want Hopkins here for questioning. You're not helping me any in this."

Martling sighed. "The man's a relative," he replied. "I feel duty bound to do everything possible for him."

"You weren't so fussy about relatives this afternoon when your own safety was involved."

"I didn't suspect Hopkins," Mart-

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ling said. "Until the man is proved guilty, I must help him. He won't leave town. You can question him any time." Martling smiled apologetically. "I can't leave him here in jail like a common criminal."

Cranston gestured in surrender. "If the bail is high enough, I'll not oppose it. Hopkins probably won't answer questions anyway after talking with his lawyer."

Bail was set and made at twenty thousand dollars. Hopkins walked out of headquarters a free man.

A few minutes after that, Dan Bailey brought in a slim, pimply-faced young man who was nervous and ill at ease.

"The search of young Martling's room turned this up," Bailey said. "Orville Rickett is the name. He lives across the hall from the room Martling occupied. Martling got drunk about ten days ago and began to boast that shortly after his sister and her husband came, he was going to have plenty of money."

"Did he?" said Cranston, getting up and glowering at the visitor. "Rickett, what else do you know about Martling? Let's have it all."

THAT scowl of Cranston's was effective. Rickett gulped and said: "Phil and I ran around a little. He was an odd fellow. Acted like he was carrying a chip on his shoulder all the time. His temper was something fierce. He'd get into a fight before you knew what was happening. Lots of times he told me he was sore at the way life had treated him. He'd say, 'Look at that damned uncle of mine. I've got to drive a truck for a living while he lolls in a big car.'

"When Phil's sister got married an' started traveling around the country, Phil wanted her to take him along. She wrote back they didn't have any place for him. Phil said her husband was behind that, an' cussed the fellow out plenty."

"Ummm," Cranston mused. "Threatened him, eh?"

"Kind of," Rickett admitted. "Phil said he'd like to fix him. I remember I kidded Phil about it. I told him he'd better be careful or he might get some magic back that'd surprise him."

"Yes?" Cranston prompted.

Rickett grinned weakly. "Phil cussed some an' said maybe he could dig up some magic that'd be a damn sight better."

"What kind of magic?"

"He didn't say."

Cranston surprised his visitor with a genial smile and the offer of a cigarette.

"Your memory is pretty good, son. Now what about this money Phil was going to get when his sister and her husband came to town?"

Rickett puffed on the cigarette and visibly expanded.

"Phil said it'd be plenty when he got it. He bragged he'd have one of the sportiest cars in town. But he wouldn't tell me where he was going to get it. I figured he was just a drunk shooting off his mouth and didn't ask him many questions."

"A man wouldn't, would he?" Cranston agreed. "I suppose Phil had a girl?"

"Plenty of them."

"One particular girl?"

Rickett grinned.

"You might say he had a couple. He went with a girl named Betty Landers until she eloped with a paying teller at the Merchants Bank. Then Phil started going with her twin sister Yvonne. He didn't even get sore about

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it. Said he couldn't tell the difference, except that Yvonne was handier because she worked in the office of the trucking company he drove for and lived in the next block. They got pretty thick. Phil was talking like maybe he'd marry Yvonne."

"Know her address?"

"I think it's 2714 Elm."

"One of the men in the outer office will take all this down," Cranston said. "Dan, get your hat. We're going out."

As they walked out together, Cranston said: "What was found in young Martling's room?"

"Nothing that'll help us," Bailey replied. "No writing at all. Looks like he destroyed everything. Queer. Where we going?"

"To see Martling's girl before she hears he's dead and gets her story ready."

SO swiftly had events moved, it was not yet eleven-thirty when they stopped before a shabby brick house in one of the poorer neighborhoods. Lights were still on inside. Cranston went to the door and rapped. A bedraggled, middle-aged woman answered.

"I want to see Yvonne Landers," Cranston said.

She brushed back a straggling wisp of hair and regarded him without interest. "Yvonne ain't here."

"Where is she?"

"I dunno."

"When will she be back?"

"I dunno."

"Lady," said Cranston calmly, "dust off that memory. I'm from police headquarters."

"Oh, my God!" Her eyes snapped wide. Her mouth stayed open. She gulped and asked weakly: "What is it? Is Yvonne in trouble?"

"You her mother?"

"No, sir. She rents a room from me."

"Never mind then. Where is she?"

"I don't know. That's the God's truth, mister. She was in most of the evening, an' then her boy friend, Phil Martling, called up an' asked her to meet him down at the corner."

Cranston said carefully, "Did I hear you say *Phil Martling* made a date with her a little while ago?"

"Yes, sir. 'Twasn't hardly half an hour ago. I answered the telephone myself. He told me to tell Yvonne to meet him at the corner. I did, an' Yvonne got her hat an' went out."

Cranston was not a nervous man, but he felt a faint chill brush his back. "Did you recognize Martling's voice?" he questioned.

"It sounded kinda like him. I ain't so good recognizing voices over the phone. I don't know him so well either. Yvonne most always met him out. But I know it was him because he told me so."

"Did he have a car?"

"I wouldn't know that, mister. I didn't go with Yvonne."

Cranston suppressed an inclination to breathe hard. His voice was brittle as he asked: "What does Yvonne look like?"

"Mmmmm, kinda hard to say. She's a brunette, kind of little an' sassy. She weighs a hundred an' one pounds because she told me the other day. She's got a small scar on her left leg above the knee, an' another—"

"Never mind," Cranston hastily interrupted. "What was she wearing tonight?"

"A blue dress an' a white straw hat. One of them tip-up hats in the back, you know."

"If she comes back," Cranston said

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as he turned away, "tell her to call police headquarters at once. It's important. She's not in any trouble. We merely want to question her."

For the first time that evening Cranston ran—back to the car, and threw himself behind the wheel.

"Got the address of the rooming house in the next block?" he demanded as he stepped on the starter.

"Here in my notebook," Bailey replied. "What's up? You steamed off that porch like she tied a can to your tail."

"That was the landlady. Half an hour ago someone telephoned, said he was Phil Martling, and asked the girl to meet him at the corner."

"Ouch! What do you make out of that?"

"I don't make—yet. There's a bare chance someone in Martling's rooming house saw the room being searched, figured trouble was heading for the girl and called her out to warn her."

"Just as easy to tip her off over the telephone," Bailey pointed out. "And why did he say it was Martling calling?"

"I'll take the gag—why?" Cranston grunted as he swung in to the curb and came to a quick stop in the next block. "Run in, Dan, and see if there was a chance the call came from here. See if any of the roomers beside that fellow who came to headquarters have gone out since the room was searched. I want to think."

BAILEY was in the house not more than three minutes. When he came back he was positive. "The landlady only has four roomers. Martling was one, Rickett another. The other two haven't been out of the house or used a telephone since early in the evening. And half an hour ago Rickett was being brought to headquarters. I'm getting curious."

"I'm getting afraid," Cranston confessed as he drove swiftly away. "The one man whom it'd be natural to suspect was in a position to get her."

"Hopkins?"

"Yes, He left headquarters more than an hour ago."

"He drove off with Judge Blodgett. I saw them leave."

Cranston stopped short by a call box, jumped out, opened the box with his key and was on the direct wire to headquarters.

"Call Judge Blodgett at his house or office," Cranston ordered. "Ask the Judge if he knows where Hopkins, his client, has been the last three-quarters of an hour. And get in touch with the men who cover Twenty-fourth and South Elm. I want information about a small young woman wearing a blue dress and white hat who was at Twenty-fourth and Elm about half to three-quarters of an hour ago. She may have been walking or she may have been picked up by a car. She had a date on the corner there. I'll hold the wire."

The report from Judge Blodgett came quickly. Cranston's face grew grim as he listened. The Judge had been located at his home. He had driven just three blocks from headquarters with his client, and had dropped Hopkins at a garage which rented small cars by the hour.

Hopkins had stated his desire to drive alone. The Judge had stepped into the garage, vouched for Hopkins, and then had driven on home.

"Get the garage!" Cranston directed. "Find out if Hopkins is still out. If he is, get a description of his car, and any dope about where he was going, or might be now."

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The radio car covering the Elm Street district reported in immediately. It had found the patrolman on that beat and spoke for him. Yvonne Landers had not been seen.

Then the garage report. Hopkins had driven off in a Chevrolet sedan, destination unknown. He had rented the car until the following noon.

"Trace that sedan if you can. Have it picked up. I'll call in later." Cranston closed the box and got back in his own car.

"Chalk up more trouble from easy bail," he said bitterly. "If I had my way, I'd never spring a dangerous man. An arrest doesn't change his nature. If he's bad one hour, he's just as bad the next. Maybe worse. Hell's to pay. Hopkins is loose in a rented car—and if we ever see that girl alive again, it'll be a lucky day for her."

## CHAPTER V

### More Murder!

CRANSTON mused aloud as he drove hard toward Martling's house.

"Phil Martling was sore at his brother-in-law. He blocked the land sale. That's no cause for murder. Phil was packing an empty gun tonight. He might have been bluffing Hopkins. Yet they came to the house together, seemed to be getting along fairly peacefully.

"If we admit Hopkins killed the boy, why should he go after the girl? And if there was murder in the air, did all these people in the house know it tonight? Was that why they seemed queer? There's got to be a motive too."

"Sweat Hopkins in one room and his wife in another, and you'll probably get it," Bailey advised cynically.

Cranston came back savagely.

"I'll do it if I don't get a break. There's too much pussyfooting being done. First we'll see if Hopkins went to Martling's house."

They found Martling's place still ablaze with light. An automobile rolled up the driveway ahead of them, stopped beside the house. Martling got out as they pulled up alongside.

"Do you know where Hopkins is?" Cranston called.

"In the house, isn't he?" Martling replied in surprise. "He left headquarters with his lawyer. I've been driving around trying to see some way out of this miserable business. Come in. I guess Hopkins is in there."

"I doubt it," Cranston said, getting out. "He rented a car and went off somewhere."

"You don't think John has run off, do you?" Martling asked nervously.

Cranston grunted with a certain sour relish.

"Hard to say what he's done. If he's gone, you're holding the sack for his bail. Serves you right for taking him away from us."

"I'm beginning to realize it," Martling agreed meekly. "But I thought it was for the best. I—I wonder where John could have gone. He should have come straight here to see his wife."

Despite the late hour, the house was still humming with life. Many guests were spending the night. Many witnesses were present to state that Hopkins had not returned.

Cranston telephoned headquarters. The information he got snapped him into action again.

"Notify towns to the north to watch for him," he barked. "Notify the sheriff that I'm driving outside the city to make an arrest if possible."

As Cranston put the telephone down, Martling spoke eagerly. "Did you get word of him?"

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"A patrol car saw him—or at least a car like the one he rented—heading north on the Edston highway at better than sixty. They chased him; but he made it over the city limits, so they let him go. It looks like you're going to be out some bail, Martling."

Martling's glassy stare was shot with distress. "I don't care about the bail," he protested. "It doesn't seem possible John would do that. If he's innocent, why should he want to run away?"

"What makes you think he's innocent?" Cranston growled.

"He's innocent until he's proved guilty, isn't he? And I still can't believe John would murder his wife's brother. He's—he's simply not that kind of a man."

"The boy didn't die of heart failure," Cranston said shortly. "Is there anything out that Edston road which would make Hopkins break the speed limit at this time of night?"

"I can't think of a thing," Martling confessed. "How can you get him back?"

"Short of turning out half the State, there's nothing much I can do. He's got a good start. The main roads will be watched, but if he starts traveling side roads he'll probably get away. I'm going to drive out to the county line and take a chance on getting some trace of him."

"Do you mind if I go ahead of you, Cranston?"

"Not at all. Start now if you want to."

Martling hurried toward the front door. Cranston went upstairs. The man he had stationed at the door of Lora Hopkins' room was still there.

"How's she doing?" Cranston inquired.

"All right, Chief. A nurse is with her."

"Any visitors?"

"No. She and the nurse have been talking a lot."

"I guess she can talk to me then," Cranston said. He opened the door, stepped into the sick room.

THE nurse was there in her crisp white uniform. A hatchet-faced, determined looking nurse. The patient sat in bed against a stack of pillows. She was pale, but gave no indication of going into hysterics the next moment. Her eyes, however, grew frightened and wary as she recognized Cranston.

The nurse stepped forward with a frown of displeasure. "You'll have to get out," she said firmly. "No visitors are allowed."

"I'm in," said Cranston reasonably. "I might as well stay now. Don't you be worried, Mrs. Hopkins. I've got some news you ought to know."

A glimmer of hope showed on her face. "Have you found something to prove John innocent?"

She had been crying. Losing a brother had been a hard blow, of course. Cranston had to admire her faith in Hopkins. He felt slightly guilty as he skirted the question delicately.

"Your husband was released on bail an hour or so ago," he said.

Relief swept over her. "I'm so glad! Uncle Frederick said he was going to arrange it." Then worry came again. "If John was released an hour ago, where is he?"

"That's what I want to ask you," Cranston said, looking down at her. He smiled faintly. "Believe me, Mrs. Hopkins, all this is not pleasant for me either. But I've got to dig out the truth. I never pressed a charge against an innocent man, and I never will. But something's happened now I can't un-

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derstand. Maybe you can explain it. As soon as your husband was released, he rented an automobile and drove north out of town as fast as the car would go. Why did he do that?"

She was startled, bewildered—and truthful in her answer.

"I haven't the slightest idea. John had no such intention when he left here."

"Maybe he's trying to escape."

Her answer was sharp and positive. "Of course not! Why should he escape? He's innocent!"

"It's going to put him in a bad light."

The nurse said: "This is against doctor's orders. I can't allow any more of this."

Lora Hopkins herself silenced the nurse with a gesture.

"I'm all right. I didn't want to stay in bed here in the first place." She looked at Cranston gravely. "John isn't running away. Please believe me. I know him. I know he's innocent. If he drove out of town, he had a reason."

Some of her sincerity got across to Cranston. Before he could say anything, Lora Hopkins exclaimed.

"I just thought of something! John and I were going to drive out north of town tomorrow and see a relative of mine. He's probably gone there now."

"Was the relative here at dinner tonight?"

"No. He's a recluse. He lives alone and never goes anywhere."

"Why would your husband go there tonight?"

"I won't tell you. But I'm sure that's where John's gone."

"I'm glad somebody's sure of something," Cranston said dryly. "Where does this relative live?"

"You're not going to arrest John again?"

"I'm going to see where he went, and why. If I don't get directions from you, I'll get 'em downstairs."

"IT'S about sixteen miles out," Lora Hopkins said reluctantly. "You can get there by the Edston highway or the Little Neck highway. Out there the two roads are about five miles apart. Will Henderson lives on a crossroad, about halfway between them. You go out fifteen miles on the Edston road from the city limit, turn east, cross Blue River bridge, and the first house beyond is the one."

Cranston left her sitting against the pillows, staring after him anxiously.

"Any luck?" Bailey asked as he followed out to the car.

"More mystery. I got a tip where Hopkins may have gone. We'll see."

Cranston drove fifteen miles out and turned onto the narrow dirt road he found. Farmhouses grew less frequent away from the highway. The moonlight was still and white on wide fields and dark clumps of woodland.

"Nice out here," Bailey sighed. "Don't know as I blame Hopkins for coming."

"He'll be the first man I ever heard of driving over sixty to get out in the moonlight," Cranston said sarcastically.

A short down-grade put them on Blue River bridge. Loose planks slammed loudly under the car wheels. And then a steep grade up a wooded slope put them on straight, level road once more. The house was there ahead, on the north of the road. An automobile was just pulling away from the front.

Before the other car reached the road, Cranston blocked the driveway entrance with his car and jumped out. As he stepped into the glare of the

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headlights, a cry of relief greeted him. Martling tumbled out of the other car and came forward. The man was excited, almost incoherent.

"*Thank God!*" Martling gulped. "I wasn't looking for you to appear here! I was afraid it was more trouble!"

"What's the matter?" Cranston asked in amazement.

"I—I feel like I want to be sick!" Martling groaned. "It's ghastly!" Martling was unstrung. His hands were shaking. Something had shocked him badly.

"Take it easy," Cranston advised. "What's ghastly?"

"S-see for yourself!" Martling stuttered excitedly. "In the house there!"

Cranston ran toward the small frame house. Bailey pounded at his heels.

The front windows showed light behind drawn shades. There was no porch. Two wooden steps led to the front door. Cranston placed his handkerchief over the doorknob, let himself inside.

Like a quiet, old-fashioned stage setting the shabby little room opened before him. A nickel-plated kerosene lamp on a round table gave the light. On a wooden mantel at the end of the room a square wooden clock ticked busily.

Beside it a bowl of brightly-colored wax flowers bloomed stiffly under a glass bell.

Against the wall at the left of the door, on an old chesterfield covered with black hair cloth, an elderly man with an untrimmed white beard sat laxly. In a rocking chair before him a young woman apparently dozed, her head lolling against the chair back. She wore a blue dress. A white straw hat lay in her lap.

Breathing hard, Bailey poised at Cranston's shoulder, looked, blurted an oath.

THE old man had been shot through the head. Blood stained his scraggly beard. And the girl was dead too, shot through the left temple. On the worn carpet beside her chair runner lay a revolver.

The clock ticked loudly. The corpses faced each other. The shabby peace of the room and natural postures of the bodies made the scene doubly gruesome.

Bailey spoke huskily. "No wonder Martling felt sick. That's the Landers girl, isn't it?"

Cranston stepped to the chair.

"White hat—blue dress—small figure; guess it is," he said quietly. "Dan, I think we're dealing with a mad man. A fellow who's gone crazy on murder tonight. This makes three—and there'll be more if we don't stop him quickly."

Using his handkerchief again, Cranston picked up the revolver. A thirty-eight caliber, it was the same make and model as the one taken from Hopkins' trunk. Cranston looked at the serial number.

"The serial number of that other gun ended in thirty-nine," he said suddenly. "This one ends in forty. Hopkins evidently bought two guns at the same time and got a sequence of numbers."

"But why," Bailey said thickly, "did he bring the girl out here and kill her? Why did he kill this old man? Didn't his own wife tell you he meant to come here tomorrow? She wouldn't say that if she thought murder was likely."

Outside the door Martling spoke hoarsely. "They're both dead, aren't they?"

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"As dead as they'll ever be," Bailey replied. "Come in. They won't hurt you."

"That first look was enough for me," Martling refused hastily. "I've never had such a shock. It's—it's ghastly!"

Cranston carried the lamp from the table and inspected the bodies closely by its light.

"Henderson was killed here in the house," he said. "But look at the dust on this girl's dress, and the way it's crumpled and wrinkled. Look at her hat. She was brought here dead and planted in the chair."

"Then the fellow who did it must be mad—or maybe thinks he's got a sense of humor," Bailey commented grimly. "Say, what's that in the old man's hand?"

Cranston held the lamp while Bailey stooped and opened the clenched fingers.

A crumpled calling card lay in the palm. One look—and Bailey silently extended it.

JOHN HOPKINS was engraved on the card.

"Now was he crazy enough to leave that, or did the old man happen to have it in his hand when he was shot?" Bailey demanded.

Cranston shrugged.

Outside the door Martling talked on, as if the sound of his voice gave him comfort. "When I turned in off the road I saw another car had been here before me. You can see by the tracks in the dust. But I never looked for anything like this."

Staring at the bodies, Cranston spoke without turning his head. "How did you happen to come to this spot, Martling? You merely started toward the county line ahead of me."

"It occurred to me that if Hopkins wanted to hide, this would be a good place. Henderson hardly ever went off the property. No one came here to see him. A car could be stored out of sight in the barn. Also while I was out this way, I wanted to tell Henderson we missed him at the gathering tonight. If he'd come, he'd be alive now. That woman puzzles me. He never had women around."

"Nothing more we can do here," Cranston said.

He put the lamp back on the table and stepped outside.

"You'd better go home and get a stiff drink, Martling," he advised. "I'd appreciate it if you'd drive back by the other road and keep an eye out for Hopkins."

Martling shifted uneasily in the moonlight. "Do you think he's still around here?"

"Shouldn't be surprised. It looks as if he did this."

"I don't believe it!" Martling blurted. "Why should he kill old William? And he couldn't have known that girl."

"Nevertheless," said Cranston evenly, "I'm going to arrest him for these murders. And if you try to bail him out again, I'll get nasty."

"Don't worry. I'll keep out of all this from now on," Martling promised fervently. "What must I do if I see Hopkins on my way back?"

"Nothing. Report it. I'll be at your house. If Hopkins is there, I'll have him. Let's get going. No one'll bother the house until the sheriff gets here."

Cranston backed his car into the road and turned back the way he had come. Martling went the other way.

The car bounced, lunged, swayed dangerously on the rough road as Cranston drove recklessly. He made a

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skidding turn into the highway and jammed the accelerator down hard.

Reproachfully Bailey said: "Trying to kill us too?"

"I've got lots to do—and little time to do it," Cranston retorted grimly. "I'll get out at Martling's house, and here's what I want you to do."

Bailey listened in growing amazement. At the end he spoke his mind. "You're either a wizard, or crazy, Chief. If it works, it'll be a new kind of black magic. If it doesn't, you're going to find yourself in trouble."

"I'll take a chance on it," Cranston said, keeping his eyes on the flashing ribbon of road. "This crazy mess has got to be broken with a bang—and I'm going to try it."

## CHAPTER VI

### More Magic!

CRANSTON left the car at Martling's house. Bailey drove on. Lighting a cigarette, Cranston walked briskly to the house.

Among the cars parked outside was a Chevrolet sedan which had not been there before. By the license Cranston saw it was a rented car. He was not surprised to find Hopkins in the drawing room talking with a group of the guests.

Hopkins looked up, saw Cranston in the drawing room doorway, and came to him at once. A faint smile was on the magician's mobile face. In the abrupt silence which gripped the room Hopkins' greeting carried to everyone.

"I've been waiting for you, Cranston. My wife tells me you went out to Henderson's after me. I came back by the other road. Sorry to have made you so nervous. My business was important."

Cranston's reply was audible also.

"Did you finish your business, Hopkins?"

"I did," Hopkins said with every indication of satisfaction. "You can count on a surprise very shortly."

Cranston answered woodenly.

"I've already had the surprise. Henderson has been murdered. In the same room with him is the dead body of Philip Martling's girl friend. You're under arrest again, Hopkins, for double murder this time."

For once Hopkins was not master of himself. The faint smile on his face as the room behind him filled with pandemonium and the guests crowded toward them.

The piercing eyes of the magician clouded with apprehension. His face was suddenly haggard.

He moistened his lips, and then spoke haltingly.

"Henderson was alive and smiling when I left him—and no woman was in the house."

A woman began to sniffle, "Poor Uncle Will! This *horrible* night! What will happen next?"

Cranston frowned at the circle. "You people stay down here and be quiet," he warned. "I'm taking Hopkins upstairs to question him, and I don't want to be bothered."

Silent, haggard, Hopkins accompanied Cranston upstairs like a man walking in a bad nightmare.

Twenty minutes later someone knocked at the bedroom where Cranston was talking with his prisoner. A nervous manservant stood outside the door.

"Mr. Martling requests me to tell you that he is home," the man said.

"I'll be down," Cranston said. "Inform Martling I want everyone except the children in the music room. The servants included."

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WHEN Cranston went downstairs and found Martling, the people were trailing uneasily into the music room. Martling was pale, nervous, still suffering from the shock of walking in on the two bodies.

"Where's Hopkins?" he asked.

"Upstairs with his wife."

"Is it safe?" Martling asked quickly. "I—I should think you'd want him in a cell. And I'm not quite clear as to why you want us all in the music room. These people have nothing to do with Will Henderson's death."

"I'm giving Hopkins one chance to clear himself."

"Clear himself?" Martling looked astonished. "How can he clear himself in the music room?"

"Go in there and see," Cranston said noncommittally. "I haven't much faith in it myself—but if Hopkins really has the power he claims, he'll be able to surprise us all."

"I still don't understand," Martling insisted. "What powers do you mean?"

"Occult. Old secrets of magic."

Martling laughed sharply. "The man's pulling your leg. Aren't you being idiotic to swallow that, Cranston?"

"Probably," Cranston assented. "But I can't pass up any angles. Now I've got to use your telephone."

For some minutes Cranston talked with headquarters, then strolled into the music room. All the seats were filled; some people were standing. A low buzz of uneasy conversation filled the room. The atmosphere was loaded with uncertain apprehension.

The red velvet stage curtains were closed. The big room was in semi-gloom. Eyes followed Cranston as he walked forward to the stage and stepped behind the curtains.

Another fifteen minutes passed. Now and then Cranston looked out over the audience. Each time he found them more uneasy. Martling was sitting on the center aisle, several rows back from the front, talking to those nearby. Cranston finally went down into the audience and stopped by Martling.

"Almost ready," he said.

Martling answered peevishly.

"Frankly, Cranston, I can't see any sense to this. These people have nothing to do with Hopkins' guilt or innocence. They're tired and sleepy. Can't you take Hopkins to headquarters and deal with him the routine way?"

"I'm giving him his chance here," Cranston refused calmly. "Here we go."

From the projection booth a spotlight played on the curtains. They parted. Hopkins in his full dress, and his wife in a dark traveling suit, stood there in the spotlight. Hopkins' face was a pale mask as he stared out over the audience. When he spoke, his voice was heavy.

"My friends, tonight I have been accused of three murders, none of which I committed. The circumstantial evidence is so strong it seems likely I may be electrocuted if I can't clear myself. The only way I can do so quickly is by certain dangerous powers revealed to me in my studies of the old secrets of magic." The audience hung on his words.

Hopkins continued in the same unnatural, strained voice. "Men of my profession who know these secrets seldom speak of them, even among themselves. We are afraid of them. But tonight, in desperation, I have asked, and obtained, permission to demonstrate them to you. Earlier in the evening I assured you my feats were

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all trickery. Those you saw were mostly so. With them I earn my living and amuse my audiences. But now, in an attempt to save my life, I am going to dip into reality. Before you, on this stage, with the help of my Burmese assistants, who are also learned in the ancient magic of their race, I am going to roll back the veil of life and death. I will attempt to bring before you a dead soul to testify for me."

A gasp rippled over the audience.

Hopkins stilled it with a quickly lifted hand.

"I must have silence," he begged. "Please! My own life is at stake."

IN the sudden hush which fell, one of the Oriental assistants stepped out of the wings and sat cross-legged at the front of the stage. On a small wooden flute he began to play slow, haunting music.

Moving in silence another assistant brought out the large wicker hamper and long sword which Hopkins had used before. Following him the third man set before the hamper a brass bowl from which incense curled lazily.

Hopkins tipped the hamper forward and lifted the lid. The interior was empty. Closing the hamper he passed the sword over the brass incense bowl. Blue flame leaped up, followed by a large cloud of incense.

The two assistants went down on their knees, bowed to the basket, and began to chant unintelligible words in time with the flute music.

Lora Hopkins stepped to one side and took no part. Hopkins began to pace slowly back and forth about the basket, marking cabalistic patterns on the stage with the tip of the long sword.

Now and then he swept the blade over the brass bowl, bringing each time a burst of blue smoke and flame.

The spotlight illuminated every move clearly. Hopkins' movements became faster. He began to chant unintelligible words also in a low, harsh, guttural voice. Slowly the spotlight dimmed. The burst of blue flame in the brass bowl threw wavering light over the stage. The spotlight turned blue, so that Hopkins moved in a blue haze.

The strong smell of incense crept out over the audience. The unnatural blue light, the strange performance, the shrill, sad music created a weird, ghostly effect. Hopkins' face was a ghastly hue as he moved about the basket. Not even the conventional formal clothes saved him from resembling an ancient magician engrossed in weird, unnatural rites.

Abruptly Hopkins stopped at one side of the basket. Three times he loudly uttered a word no one could understand. Three times he struck the hamper top with the flat of the sword. Then he stepped back and waited.

The shrill flute music dropped to a sobbing gurgle, died away. Silence fell over stage and audience. All eyes were glued on the blue haze where Hopkins fixedly regarded the basket.

Behind Cranston someone sucked a breath in sharply. Cranston's own skin crawled as the lid of the hamper gradually began to lift. An arm pushed up from inside. Spectators stirred uneasily as the hamper lid tipped backward with an audible sound. A slender young woman stood up.

Her dress was blue. She carried a crumpled straw hat. Her hair was slightly disarrayed. Her face was pallid. But the most gruesome touch was a fresh wound in her temple which showed clearly as she faced the

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audience and stepped out of the hamper.

Hopkins extended the sword. She turned to him, sad and expressionless.

"Who are you?" Hopkins asked. His voice was hoarse, strained.

Her reply was sad. "I was Yvonne Landers."

"You *were* Yvonne Landers? Who are you now?"

Puzzled she regarded him.

"I don't know. I've been dead only a little while."

A STIR of excitement broke out at the back of the room. Someone had fainted there. The tension in the audience was rapidly climbing to the breaking point. Hardboiled as Cranston was, his own nerves were tight as he watched the gruesome scene on the stage. If this were not the dead Yvonne Landers, he could not tell the difference.

Yvonne Landers continued to regard Hopkins fixedly. His hoarse voice threw questions at her.

"Did you know Philip Martling?"

"We were to have been married."

"Do you know who killed him?"

"Yes. Phil told me just before you called me here?"

"Do you know why he was killed?"

"Yes."

Hopkins' voice rose higher. "Do you know who killed you and William Henderson?"

"Yes," said Yvonne Landers sadly. "I know everything now. I was dead when I got to Henderson's house."

"How did you get there?"

"My body was carried in an automobile trunk."

"Was the bullet which killed Philip Martling fired off this stage?"

"No."

"Did the same person kill Philip Martling, William Henderson and yourself?"

"Yes."

"Do you know where the killer is now?"

"Yes."

"Yvonne Landers," Hopkins said in a terrible voice, "will you put your cold hands on the guilty man and point him out to everyone—and then give us the proof needed to clear me?"

A dropping pin could have been heard as Yvonne Landers turned and moved silently to the edge of the stage. Her steps made no sound.

Chairs rattled as those nearest her drew back. A woman in the second row squealed hysterically: "I can't stand any more of this!"

Yvonne Landers ignored it all as she advanced up the aisle. Her sad face did not change expression. The bloody wound in her temple looked more horrible than ever close up in the murky gloom. Her advance had the calm, chill certainty of death and fate.

A man's wild sobbing cry rang out.

"Oh, God! I though she was dead for good! Take her away! Don't let her come near me!"

A chair crashed over as Martling stumbled into the aisle to run. Cranston blocked the way. Martling fought to get past.

"They were going to take it all away!" Martling sobbed. "I had to kill them!"

"Take what away?" Cranston snapped.

"The money! I changed the will and took the wrong land! The oil land! Philip suspected it! Will Henderson had the old letters. The more I killed, the more I had to kill!" Martling squirmed around in Cranston's arm. Yvonne Landers was almost to him. "Take her away"

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Martling screamed. *"I can't stand it! I can't . . ."*

Martling's voice broke off. He slid down through Cranston's arms to the floor. Another wave of confusion was sweeping the crowded hall.

Cranston caught the millionaire in his arms and started toward the stage, following the retreat of Yvonne Landers.

"Be quiet!" Cranston bawled to those around him. "I'll explain everything! Somebody call a doctor! Where's that nurse?"

YVONNE LANDERS walked into the wings and vanished. Cranston put Martling down on the stage and worked over him. The white clad nurse hurried up and helped. While they were doing that, Dan Bailey and half a dozen detectives filtered through the audience, calming the people. When Cranston stepped to the footlights and lifted his arms, quiet fell again.

"By now some of you may suspect what's behind this," Cranston said to them. "At least I owe you all an explanation. Most of you knew when Martling's brother died, seventeen years ago, the will left the cash, house and part of the ranch land to the two children—and some of the land to Martling here. Martling's share was supposed to be the poorer part. But it held oil. He became a millionaire, and his niece and nephew got nothing much from the land they inherited.

"Many of you have disliked Martling for neglecting his niece and nephew, when most of his money came from land their father gave him. Philip Martling smarted under it. Lately he began to investigate. When he jogged William Henderson's failing memory, the old man remembered vaguely receiving a letter long ago from Philip Martling's father, mentioning that the north half of his ranch had clear indications of an oil dome beneath, and some day the children might be rich.

"The old man was something of a recluse even in those days," Cranston said. "When the oil was found on Martling's inherited land, Henderson thought nothing of it. He never stopped to think that Martling had inherited the north part of the ranch, which the owner had considered most valuable and intended to leave to his children. Henderson still had the letter somewhere, but took his time about finding it."

A man down near the front spoke aloud. "That's like Will was. Stubborn as a mule."

Cranston smiled faintly and went on. "Philip Martling was too impatient to wait for all his proof that Martling had changed the north and south readings in the will, so that Martling himself inherited the potentially valuable land. Philip went to Martling with his suspicions and swore he'd prove them.

"Martling laughed at the story, but finally said that sooner than quarrel with relatives he would buy the remaining worthless land from Philip and his sister at a far larger price than it was worth. When Mrs. Hopkins heard of the offer she and her husband wanted to sell and get the cash money before they did anything further. Philip Martling refused. He was young, hot-headed, and determined to take most of Martling's fortune away at one stroke.

"He didn't know," said Cranston to his absorbed audience, "that he was signing his own death warrant. Martling knew his own guilt. He had reason to suspect the matter might be brought out here tonight before every-

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one. Young Philip had a hazy idea he'd mentioned to his sister putting a gun on his uncle and making him confess before everyone. He even brought an empty gun along tonight.

"John Hopkins forbade that, but he was determined to confront Martling with the accusations himself. His wife begged him not to spoil her evening with her relatives, and John Hopkins agreed to wait until tomorrow.

"But Martling had already decided to settle his troubles in his own way. Philip Martling had to go first. He was the root of the trouble. Martling was clever. He arranged for police to be present while he killed. He knew a gun would be fired on the stage during the act. He had stolen John Hopkins' spare revolver from the theater dressing room, which he visited day before yesterday. He sat beside Philip Martling with the revolver wrapped in cloth.

"WHEN Hopkins fired on the stage, Martling reached over and shot his nephew through the heart. In the darkness, the excitement and noise, no one noted the movement or the extra sound. Most of the smoke and powder particles were strained out by the cloth around the gun muzzle. Blood hid from casual observation any marks on the shirt which would have told us the shot was fired so close. The shirt was re-examined closely at headquarters a little while ago and powder particles and bits of fiber from a different kind of cloth were found around the bullet hole.

"Philip Martling had boasted to his uncle that his girl was guarding some of the proof he possessed. That sealed her fate. Martling got her in his car by a ruse as soon as he could. What passed between them we'll never know. But he killed her and stuffed her body in the luggage trunk at the back of his car until he could dispose of her effectively. While he was sitting there among you a few minutes ago, my men searched his car and found blood stains in the luggage trunk.

"Martling drove back here to the house with Yvonne Landers' body in the car trunk. He heard from me that John Hopkins had been seen driving north out of town. Martling evidently became afraid that Hopkins suspected him, and had gone out to William Henderson's farm to get that old letter and any possible information. Martling rushed out there after him. Hopkins had gone with the letter when he got there.

"Again we'll never know what was said there, but Martling shot the old man and carried the body of Yvonne Landers into the house. He was just leaving when we arrived. We found the bodies, Hopkins' spare gun, and one of Hopkins' cards in William Henderson's clenched hands.

"At first sight there seemed no doubt that Hopkins had done it. The tire tracks of his car were outside, his gun was there—the same one that had killed Philip Martling, tests show—and his card was in the dead man's hand. It was perfect.

"Too perfect," Cranston said grimly. "Hopkins had been searched at police headquarters. He had no cards on him. We had his trunks, stage apparatus, and luggage out of his hotel room. He didn't come back to this house after he left headquarters. He couldn't very well have gotten cards and a gun in the short time which had elapsed.

"Martling's guilt was plain from that moment. I came back to the house here to get more proof. After put-

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ting Hopkins under arrest, and talking with him, I had most of the picture, but not all the proof I needed. Hopkins gladly consented to bring Yvonne Landers back from the grave. I knew Martling would wilt before her. He wouldn't have been human, if he hadn't. He'd left her dead. He *knew* she was dead."

"Mister!" said an anxious voice from the audience. "What happened to that dead girl? I'm still ready to run."

Cranston smiled grimly.

"She's standing there in the wings with her husband. Martling didn't know Yvonne Landers had a twin sister. I sent for the sister at once. She consented to have a grease paint wound made on her temple and impersonate the dead girl if it would help trap the killer. And it did."

Another voice came out of the audience. "Thank the Lord, I can pass the graveyard now without fixin' to faint!"

And a second voice: "I want to see Fred's face when he comes out of that swoon an' finds he was tricked into confessing. He'll be fit to tie. If they don't find him guilty now, there ain't no justice."

Cranston said one more thing before he left the footlights. "There is justice, my friends. Martling convicted himself, passed sentence, and carried it out. He died there in the aisle from a heart attack."

## When a Crook Says It With Flowers

A TRAINING in hotel management involves many things not the least of which are the methods which criminals may use in victimizing the hotel. One of these methods has caused losses where the trick was not expected. In this instance, the crook phones down from the room to the florist and gives an order for some flowers to be sent up to the room. The crook suggests that change for a bill of large denomination, say a hundred dollars, be sent along with the flowers. When they are delivered, the crook takes the change and sends the boy back after some more flowers or gets rid of him on some other pretext. Needless to say, the boy returns to the florist without the bill of large denomination and without the change therefor. When he gets back to the room the crook has vanished.

—*John Berry.*

Upon the question of RELIEF
My plan is simple, plain and brief.
Take Alka-Seltzer, tried and true.
It's good for colds and headaches too.
HEADACHES COLDS
And if by chance you celebrate
A victory or defeat,
A glass of Alka-Seltzer's great
To put you on your feet
MORNING MISERY
Be Wise—Alkalize
Alka-Seltzer
Alka-Seltzer Makes a sparkling alkalizing solution containing an analgesic (acetyl salicylate). You drink it and it gives prompt, pleasant relief for Headaches, Sour Stomach, Distress after Meals, Colds and other minor Aches and Pains
Alkalize with Alka Seltzer
AT ALL DRUGGISTS 30¢ 60¢ SLIGHTLY MORE IN CANADA

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"Hold it, Sugar dear!" a voice called. "Step back, Sarah, so I can plug him neater."

SPECIAL SHORT

D F W

# Four Thousand Dollars Change

By D. B. McCandless

THE door which said "Watson Detective Agency" banged inward. In the shabby office beyond the door, the long, red-headed young man who had been cradled between a chair and a desk sat up, removed a black derby and spun it accurately at a coat rack.

A woman stalked through the open door, a large woman, solid with the solidity of rock. She paused in the middle of the dusty floor, square-toed shoes spread, an armful of paper bundles clasped to her ruggedly corseted bosom. She lifted her free hand, wrenched a nondescript hat from her gray hair, and bent bristling brows upon the young man. She said, hoarsely: "Ben Todd, I'm still looking for that damn shoe button!"

*Sarah Watson, She-Devil Private Detective, Wanted Money and a Certain Shoe-button, Even if It Took Gun-play, Thievery and Brazen Treachery to Get It!*

The young man grinned, unlimbered himself, pushed a swivel chair out from behind the roll-top desk at the won-



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dow. He shook his head slowly from side to side, said, sadly:

"It's getting you, Sarah Watson. It's getting you."

Sarah Watson slammed her bundles down on the desk. She plumped down hard in the chair he held for her, put her fists on the arms of it, swung around to glare up at him.

"Of course it's getting me," she said. "It's upsetting my stomach. It's keeping me awake. I've spent more time and thought on this Barber case, young feller, than I would on a case that meant money to us—if we had a case that meant money to us."

Sarah Watson sat silent a moment, glaring up at Ben Todd. Then she lifted her fists, stared at them, and flexed her stubby fingers.

"I want to get my hands," she said, "on the windpipe of the man who kidnapped that Barber child and sent her back dead, with her rag doll covered with dried blood. I keep thinking of that rag doll, Ben, that rag doll and its shoe-button eyes. One of those shoe-button eyes was missing when the doll and the child came home together . . . in their box. If I could find that shoe button, Ben Todd . . ."

Ben Todd wiped a hand across his wide mouth.

"Go on! Laugh at me, you long hyena!" said Sarah. "Some day, I'll find that missing shoe button in a spot where it's possible the kidnapper might have taken that child, and then—then, I'll have a clue. . . ."

Ben Todd chuckled. He said: "Now you're beginning to talk like a dick, old girl! Clues are slightly extraneous, when the murderer is known."

Sarah rose abruptly.

"Whadya mean?"—she said, hoarsely. "The murderer is known? What—who . . . ? You quit talking in circles, young feller, and come down to scratch. Have some of the Barber ransom bills been traced?"

"No. A lot of the Barber ransom bills have been turned in, old girl, and subsequently soaked with the sweat of honest dicks, struggling to trace 'em. And a lot more of the Barber ransom bills, four thousand dollars worth, to be exact, are resting this moment in the District Attorney's private safe, because the District Attorney knows it's useless to try to pin them on the murderer."

"What would a squirt like you know about the District Attorney?"

"This much, old girl. The District Attorney knows the man who engineered the Barber kidnapping—the man who killed the Barber child with his own hands, after the ransom had been paid. The District Attorney knows him, and he knows he can't convict him. Why? Because the District Attorney needs evidence. He needs evidence that no political pull, no expensive lawyers, no underworld stooges, can help the murderer to crawl out of. Evidence, Sarah, evidence, definite and unanswerable. Shoe buttons won't do."

Sarah lifted a square fist and brought it down. One of the brown paper bags on her desk top exploded under the force of the blow. Fine, white, powdery stuff sprayed out of the bag and over Sarah's rusty black garments.

"Ben Todd," she said, firmly, "you quit talking and say something. If the District Attorney knows so all-fired much, and you know so all-fired much—you tell me—*who is this murderer?*"

Ben Todd shook his head. He said, sadly:

"I'd like to tell you, Sarah, but . . ."

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Sarah's mouth became a thin crack over the jutting rock of her chin. She lifted her fist.

"Ben Todd," she said, "you're going to tell me, if I have to wallop it out of you!"

BEN TODD ducked, slid past her waggling fist, rounded her, reached for the black derby pendent on the coat rack, thought better of it, and paused on the other side of the high, roll-top desk. Sarah Watson said: "You tell me . . . . !"

Ben Todd grinned. Gingerly, he extended a thumb, pressed it into the mound of powdery white stuff which had spilled from the broken bag, and tasted the thumb. Thoughtfully, he said: "Sugar."

"You whelp!" shouted Sarah. "You tell me the name of that murderer!"

Ben Todd, making for the door, stopped, turned a grinning face, lifted his thumb to his wide mouth, licked the thumb and said:

"Sarah, I just finished telling you."

Sarah Watson said a truckman's word. Ben Todd retreated to the door, laid hold of the knob, and staggered back, as the door flew inward, viciously, knocking him off balance.

Two men stepped through the door. One brought the butt end of a gun down on Ben Todd's head. The other closed the door quietly, stepped over Ben Todd's suddenly recumbent body, and placed a gun against Sarah Watson's stomach.

Sarah Watson looked down at the gun. She said: "If you shoot there, feller, the bullet will flatten on solid whalebone. What's all this to-do about?"

"You're going for a ride."

Her gray eyes probed the evasive eyes of the man with the gun, then shot to the equally uneasy eyes of the man who remained at the door, beside the sprawled length of Ben Todd. One of the hands on her black skirted hips began to slip slowly down. She said: "What kind of a ride?"

The man with the gun said, "A joy ride," grinned, and added, "Mr. Mullins wants to see you."

The stubby tips of Sarah's sliding fingers disappeared under the folds of her skirt. She said:

"Mr. Mullins, eh? The name's kind of familiar. What's he want?"

"Search me, lady. All I know is, he'll get it. Sugar Mullins always gets it."

Sarah Watson's fingers came out suddenly from under the folds of her skirt. She lifted them and patted the bow-knot of garnets at her throat. She said:

"*Sugar* Mullins, eh? I'll get my hat."

She wheeled, took a stride toward the hat rack. The man with the gun said:

"Hey! None of that! Don't move."

Sarah lifted her arm, picked her ancient headgear from the hook beside Ben Todd's black derby. The man with the gun said: "Drop that, damn you."

Sarah lifted the hat toward her head. She said, scornfully: "You think I keep guns in my hat?"

The man with the gun fired. The shot made only a slight noise. The black derby still hanging on the coat tree just above Sarah's head jiggled on its hook.

She wheeled with it in her hands. She said:

"You can't fool me with trick shooting, feller. If Sugar Mullins wants to

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see me, he wants to see me alive. Put that pop-gun away, now. It's no good, with a silencer, anyway, once it's fired."

The man with the smoking gun in his hand cursed, spat and thrust the gun under his coat. When his hand came out, it held a .45. Sarah Watson said, calmly: "Now, what about my assistant, Ben Todd? He going for a ride, too?"

The man with the .45 cursed again. The man at the door spoke for him. He said, shoving a shoe none too gently into Ben Todd's ribs: "Naw. Sugar ain't interested in Todd—yet. Leave him lay. He's out for another ten minutes."

Sarah Watson looked down at the peacefully unaware face of Ben Todd. She looked down at the scorched derby in her hands. Then, carelessly, she laid the derby upon the heap of powdery white stuff spilled over the top of her desk.

"Sugar!" she said. "Such a quaint name for a racketeer! Well, what in hell are you two cowboys waiting for? Let's start!"

A HALF hour later, Sarah was ascending the front porch of a house which gleamed whitely under the black shadows of silent trees. There was a man on either side of her.

A door opened, revealing a third man. Sarah strode past him, stalked down a dimly lit hall between her captors, passed through a door at the end of the hall into bright lights and the warm, rich smell of food.

A man rose from behind a spread table, ran the back of a fat hand over the greasy orifice of his mouth, and came forward. The round ball of his body stopped rolling just in front of Sarah. His eyes, peeping over moons of flesh, fastened on the leather belt which bound Sarah's wrists together. His mouth twisted, viciously. He said: "I thought I told you two punks to bring her quiet?"

The man at Sarah's right lifted a tender finger to the aura of purple surrounding his eye. He said: "Nobody could bring this dame quiet, Boss. She's poison. She started waving a gat on the way out because we wasn't going fast enough to suit her. We took the gat away, but watch her, Boss, watch her! She's arsenic!"

The fat man considered a moment. He said: "I'm going to talk business with her. You two punks better stay here—one at the door and one at the window—just in case."

Bolt upright on a chair across the table from Mullins, Sarah watched the fourth lump of sugar plop into Mullins' coffee. She said: "Mr. Mullins, is there by any chance any other gentleman of your profession in town with the same nickname as yours?"

"There's only one Sugar," said the fat man, stirring the coffee vigorously, "and that's Sugar Mullins."

"How sweet," said Sarah.

The fat man gulped coffee, clattered the cup down. He said: "No wise-cracking, Mrs. Watson. I brought you here to talk business."

"Talk business, then."

"I'm giving you a job to do."

"I like jobs. They mean money."

"This job don't. You're doing it free."

Sarah lifted her balled hands, scrubbed sweat from the incipient mustache under her nose. She said: "Quit telling riddles, Mr. Mullins, and talk."

The fat man leaned his bosom across his plate. He said: "I want something on the District Attorney. I want something on him that will make

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him yap when I tell him to yap, and stop yapping when I tell him to stop. Get me?"

"No."

"Listen. Most men have something in their past or present that they're ashamed of, or afraid of, ain't they?"

"You ought to know."

"I do know. And I'm betting our respectable and respected and sainted District Attorney ain't no exception. I'm betting that, tucked away somewhere, there's some woman, or some papers, or some pictures, that our lily-white District Attorney would do anything to keep hidden from his wife and the public. That's what I want and what you're going to get for me."

"How?"

"You know damn well how—through Ben Todd."

"Why Ben Todd?"

"Ben Todd is the District Attorney's white-haired boy, the District Attorney's nephew. Don't try and tell me you didn't know that?"

"I didn't. But why try?"

There was silence a moment. The fat man automatically dropped another lump into his coffee cup, then leaned across his plate again. He said: "You're smart—for a woman. You can get what I need."

"Why do you need it?"

"That's none of your damn business. I need it. You're going to get it for me."

Sarah Watson stood up. She said, quietly: "No."

The fat man stood up. His pale eyes had the ferocity of an angry sow's. He said: "You're going to do this job, or else."

"Or else what?"

"Or else."

Sarah Watson stared hard at the porcine countenance of Sugar Mullins. He returned the stare, rubbing his chin.

"And what," said Sarah, "is to prevent me from saying I'll take your order, walking out of here, and never delivering the goods?"

"You'll deliver the goods within twenty-four hours, or else."

"And what's to prevent me from going to the police and demanding protection from you and your 'or else'?"

The fat man's cheeks bulged upward in a smile. He said: "I know quite a few cops. Nice boys, when you treat 'em right."

Sarah Watson took a long step toward Sugar Mullins. Sugar Mullins took a short step back. Sarah said: "Listen, you lump of lard. You may have one or two cops on your payroll—there's always a couple of rotten apples in the basket. But the police force of this town is a decent force, and if I ask for protection from your threats, I'll get it."

"Maybe," said Sugar Mullins complacently, "for a little while. Then, you'll forget, and the cops will forget, but Sugar Mullins never forgets. Going to do the job?"

"*No!*"

"Take her down to the basement guest room, boys," said Sugar Mullins. "She needs to cool off."

FOR the hundred-and-first time, Sarah Watson strode the length of Sugar Mullins' guest room, right-about-faced, and strode again. She had long since maneuvered the strap from her wrists, but she still carried her hands bunched in fists, crossed over her high stomach. The craggy forehead under her gray hair was furrowed, the bushy brows drawn down over her eyes.

The naked electric globe above her revealed bare floors, bare walls, a single

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couch, and nothing else, except a window, barred, and much too small for Sarah's girth. Now, she sought the window, peered out of it at the glisten of a gravel driveway, level with her eyes, then turned and began pacing again.

Halfway to the door of her cell, something crunched under her foot. She halted, bent with a grunt and straightened, staring down at the thing she held in her hand. The thing was a black shoe button.

For several moments, she remained absolutely still, head bent. Then, she thrust the shoe button into the recesses of her skirt and lifted her voice. The voice was hoarse, but ear-splitting.

The door flew open. A man with a black eye said: "For gosh sake, whadya want?"

"Mr. Mullins. Tell him I've found a reason why I'll do his job."

The door closed. A few minutes later, it opened to admit Mr. Mullins, in glaring pajamas and bathrobe. He sat down on the couch, opened his small mouth in a yawn. "Thought you'd come 'round, Mrs. Watson. It wouldn't be nice to know that Sugar Mullins had you on the spot."

Sarah Watson approached the couch. She stood with her hands on her hips, looking down. She said: "Listen, you half-baked dumpling! I ain't afraid of any man and I ain't afraid of you. I've decided to get your blackmail material for you, for reasons of my own, and also for five thousand dollars, payable on delivery."

The fat man got off the couch, one hand hidden in his bathrobe pocket. He said, venomously: "Before I'd pay you five thousand dollars, woman, I'd . . ."

A voice spoke from the barred window behind them. It said:

"Hold it, Sugar dear. You're covered. Step back a bit, Sarah, so I can plug him neater."

Sarah stepped back. She turned her head toward the white blur of face against the bars. She said:

"Scat! Go away, Ben Todd. I don't want Mr. Mullins shot. He's going to pay me five thousand dollars."

"You damn fool woman!" said the face at the window, "Why did you leave my best derby in a pile of sugar, then, if you didn't want me to come after you?"

"Shut up," said Sarah, and turned her back squarely on the window.

"Mr. Mullins," she said, "as I remarked, I've decided to do your job—for five thousand dollars. If I go now, in the company of my able and clever assistant, Mr. Ben Todd, I believe I can guarantee five thousand dollars' worth of what you need by morning. Do I go?"

The fat man looked at the window, and the gun sticking through the window. He took his hand out of his pocket and said: "You go."

Sarah extended five stubby fingers. She said:

"I'll take your gun, then, Mr. Mullins, just to be sure there's no unpleasantness as I leave."

A SQUARE-TOPPED car rattled and squawked to a stop halfway down a dark and ultra-fashionable street. The woman behind the wheel sighed gustily. She said: "Nice ride, Ben. Twenty minutes flat."

The long young man beside her swore softly. He said: "Listen. I've come this far without asking questions, Sarah, because it ain't safe to say anything when you're driving, but . . ."

"Get out of the car, young feller, and start moving. We're in a hurry."

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"I'll get out when I'm ready. What do you think you're doing, you old war horse, dealing with a filthy skunk like Mullins? Don't you know he's the . . ."

Ben Todd's voice died in a "glug-glub." Sarah Watson kept her fingers clamped firmly over his mouth and said:

"I expect to make money out of Mr. Mullins. After I've made the money, I'll answer questions. Meantime, you remember, please, young squirt, that you're working for me. Understand?

Ben Todd nodded. Sarah took her fingers from his mouth and said: "Why didn't you tell me long ago, Bennie, that you were the District Attorney's white-haired boy?"

"I ain't," said Ben Todd, sullenly. "He got mad at me when I quit working in his office and joined up with a measley, cheap detective agency."

"Thanks! In what capacity did you work for your uncle?"

"Private secretary."

"Um. Filed his papers away, and things like that?"

"Yeah. Dull job. I got tired of it, wanted excitement. . . ."

"You're going to get excitement. Start moving. Where's this alley you said led smack into your uncle's back yard?"

TWO shadows moved into the darkness which surrounded the grilled tradesmen's entrance to the District Attorney's residence. The long, thin shadow said, earnestly: "Sarah, for hell's sake, what's it all about? If you want something, why don't you let me take you around the front way and introduce you to the District Attorney?"

"No!" said the thick shadow, hoarsely. "Now, keep your mouth shut while I climb over this gate. We're being watched."

"Watched?"

"You don't think Mullins let us get away without tailing us, do you? Give me a boost."

There was silence, except for various grunts and gasps and the scraping of feet on iron grillework. Then, the two shadows were in the blackness of the court beyond the gate, and moving across it.

Presently, Ben Todd and Sarah Watson stood in the District Attorney's kitchen, just outside the circle of light from the flash in Sarah's hand.

"Sarah," said Ben Todd, "do you realize we may be shot at or arrested, if we get caught?"

"We ain't going to get caught. Stop gabbing, and lead the way to your uncle's private safe."

The two became shadows again, mounting through darkness, stepping on the soft carpet of a hall, vanishing through a door which opened and closed on them silently.

In the room beyond the door, Sarah's flashlight swung over an opulent desk, a row of filing cases, the open door of a closet. It came to rest upon a small safe set on a table beside the open closet. Sarah said: "Get to work on the safe."

"Nix! The combination's probably changed, anyway. Aw, listen, Sarah. . . ."

"You get to work on that safe!"

Ben Todd bent over the safe, with Sarah beside him. He twirled the combination. He said: "I can't open it," and straightened. Sarah was in the act of sweeping from the top of the safe a large bundle of banknotes.

"Just like a man!" said Sarah, in a hoarse whisper. "Locks his safe and leaves his money outside it."

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Ben Todd squinted at the top bill of the bundle. He said:

"From the looks of the serial numbers, that's Barber ransom money. Put it back, Sarah. It ain't safe money to steal. . . ."

Sarah slapped the wad of bills down. She said, firmly: "You got the safe open yet, Ben Todd?"

"No. And what's more, I don't intend to get it open."

"You mean that?"

"I mean it."

The flashlight in Sarah's hand went black. It thudded to the floor. In the darkness, there was a gasp, then the shuffling of feet, a smothered curse, a thump . . . more thumps. . . . A door closed softly. A key turned.

The flashlight came on again, in Sarah's hand, and Sarah was alone. The door which had stood open on the closet was closed. Someone was pounding on it from the other side.

Minutes passed. The flashlight darted in the darkness, paused and darted again. Drawers opened softly and closed. The flashlight went out. The thumps on the closet door died. There was silence, and then the faint rustle of a woman's wide skirt, moving toward the door to the hall.

FIFTEEN minutes later, Sarah's car turned into a block of old-fashioned flats and stopped. Sarah got out and patted the side of the car as a master pats the nag who has served him well.

She mounted a stoop, climbed three flights, let herself into the stuffy parlor which was the front end of her "railroad" flat, switched on the light, and barked a number into her phone.

"Mullins?" she said. "You listen. I agreed to get you something you need bad. You agreed to pay me five thousand for getting it. I've got it." She patted a sagging pocket in her voluminous skirt and smiled grimly. "I don't intend to deliver it, free, to any of your gun boys. I lost the gorillas you sent after me to-night, soon after I left the District Attorney's. There's only one way you'll get what I've got for you, Mullins. Call for it yourself at ten o'clock to-morrow morning, my office, alone, with five thousand dollars in your jeans."

Sarah clamped down the receiver. She stood a moment, motionless, then wheeled, one hand in her skirt pocket, her eyes on the green portières which separated the parlor from the bedroom behind it.

"Come out of there," she said, hoarsely, "whoever you are, and come quick."

A long young man with red hair stepped through the curtains. She drew her hand out of her pocket and said:

"Little Ben Todd! How on earth did you get out of your closet?"

Ben Todd grinned. He said:

"Closets have windows, sometimes," and suddenly bore purposefully down upon her.

"You damn old thief!" he shouted. "What did you lift out of the District Attorney's study?"

Sarah smiled grimly into the face thrust close to hers. She said: "Something, young feller, that's going to pay your salary for a long time to come."

Ben Todd made for the door. He said: "To hell with the salary! I'm going to the District Attorney and bust up this racket, whatever it is."

Sarah thumped the table. She said: "You're staying right here, young feller, or . . ."

Ben Todd took his hand off the

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knob. He grinned, wryly. He said: "On second thoughts, maybe I'm staying. And maybe you're staying, too. I just remembered that Sugar Mullins' big black car is parked downstairs, with a machine gun peeking out of the back window."

"Is that so? Well, what of it? You got in, didn't you? If you got in, you can get out—and so can I."

"I got in," said Ben Todd slowly, "the back way, via the fire-escape. As I stepped from the fire-escape into your kitchen, I heard somebody else starting to climb the ladder. No, I guess we're staying, old girl, both of us."

Sarah picked up the phone. She said, looking hard at Ben Todd:

"If I clear the way, Bennie, will you go home and take my word for it that it's all right to forget the District Attorney until ten o'clock tomorrow?"

Ben Todd was silent, staring into Sarah's stony face. Presently, he nodded. Sarah said a number into the telephone.

"Mullins?" she barked, "your hired men are smarter than I gave 'em credit for, but I still don't like 'em. Take 'em away, all of 'em—those in front and those in back. What? Of course I know they've got me holed in! Of course I know they can knock me off! What good will that do them . . . or you? Do you think I was fool enough to bring home in my skirt pocket something that's worth five thousand dollars to you? That's right, Mullins. Now you're beginning to get the idea! Yes, I dropped what you want somewhere between here and the place where I stole it. If I die, nobody will know where I dropped it. What? Twenty minutes? Why should it take you twenty minutes to call off your bloodhounds? Wait . . . just a min . . ."

Sarah's voice trailed off. She wheeled, with the phone in her hands, and faced the green portières which separated the parlor from the bedroom. A gun was sticking through the portières, aimed accurately at her head.

She smiled, grimly. She said, looking at the gun:

"Step forward, you-with-the-gun, Jake, or whatever - your - name - is. You're wanted on the phone. Your boss wants to tell you something."

And two minutes later, Sarah stood alone at her darkened front window. In the street below, a big, black car slid swiftly north while a long young man in a rakish derby moved swiftly south.

AT nine o'clock the next morning, she came out of her front door, her hands in the pockets of the wrinkled raincoat which covered her black shirtwaist and skirt. Her gray eyes encompassed the street. She clumped down the stoop, dived across the sidewalk and into the square-bodied wreck still standing at the curb. The wreck snorted, coughed, and moved with astonishing swiftness, toward the corner.

As it hurtled the turn, a groan sounded from its back seat. Sarah missed annihilating a milk wagon, chuckled, and stepped down on the gas. Ben Todd lifted himself painfully from the rear floor to the rear seat. He said: "I haven't spent hours in this boiler for the pleasure of being smashed up in it. Slow down, and listen. Mullins sneaked two of his rods back last night, to wait till you showed."

"Think I didn't know it? Mullins' car is right behind us now. That's why I'm showing 'em a little speed."

Ben Todd groaned again. He said: "Listen. You're a thieving, double-crossing old she-devil, but I don't want

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to see you shot to death. You've got to stop sometime, to pick up whatever it was you stole for Mullins last night, and when you do stop . . ."

Sarah chuckled. The car bounced forward into a cross street. She said: "We're going to stop now, feller," and stalled, with a fender grazing the underpinnings of a traffic cop.

The cop's mouth opened and words came out—bad words. Sarah said: "I'm sorry, officer. You'd better let that big black car behind us pass on. I'm afraid I'm stalled. . . ."

The cop said more words and made motions with his arms. The big, black car reluctantly crawled past, crossed the intersection, merged with traffic ahead.

Sarah had been making the frantic motions usually made by stallers. She ceased. Her eyes lifted, fastened on the black car still moving slowly south. Then, suddenly, her own car returned from the dead, swung in a swift right arc and darted into the line now streaming west. She leaned out, smiled graciously back at the cop.

"Thank you, officer," she shouted. "You saved our lives."

AT five minutes to ten, Sarah stalked into her office, picked up the phone and said a number into it while Ben Todd clicked the lock on the door behind them.

"Mullins?" said Sarah Watson into the phone, "It's no use. Your men didn't get what you sent them for, and I'm here in my office, whole and happy. It's five minutes to ten. I'll expect you here in five minutes, alone, with the five thousand in your pants. . . ."

She chuckled, hung up and wheeled on Ben Todd.

"Young feller," she said, "you can toddle now."

Ben Todd sat down. He took a gun out of his pocket and laid it thoughtfully on his desk. He said:

"I gave you until ten o'clock, Sarah Watson, before I squeal to the District Attorney. I'm waiting till ten."

"Wait and be damned," said Sarah, and swiveled her chair to face the door.

AT one minute to ten, a rotund shadow showed against the opaque glass of the door. Ben Todd rose, clicked open the lock. Mullins stepped across the sill and stopped, with the curve of his stomach against a gun. Sarah said:

"Lock the door again, Bennie, and take the gun out of Mr. Mullins' tummy. I want him treated with respect."

Ben Todd turned his head, met the eyes under Sarah's bristling brows, and lowered his gun. The fat man pushed past him and sat down beside Sarah's desk. He was panting. Sarah said:

"Where's the five thousand?"

Mullins drew out a small black, bulging purse. He extracted a roll of bills. Sarah's eyes glinted and lifted to Ben Todd. Ben Todd shrugged and sat down, his eyes on the money. Sarah plunged her hand into her skirt and brought forth a package of letters.

Ben Todd's chair clattered. He said: "So, that's what you stole! Those letters are the District Attorney's. Don't you dare to . . ."

"Shut up," said Sarah, and held the letters out to the fat man.

"Put the five thousand on top of the desk, Mr. Mullins," she said, "and you get these."

Mullins put the money on top of the desk. He took the letters, ripped off the ribbon, tore a sheet of paper out of its envelope. He scanned it, ran the tip of his tongue over his lower lip. He said:

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"It's the District Attorney's writing, all right. And if they're all as hot as this one, woman, you've earned the five thousand."

He put his fat fingers inside another envelope. Sarah sat very still, looking at him, a dark red spreading over the granite gray of her face.

The fat man laughed out loud, slapped his thick thigh. He did not take his eyes from the letter. Sarah moved slightly. Her hand closed over the roll of money. She lifted a shabby hand bag from the desk, thrust the bills into it.

Ben Todd came to his feet, crouching, long arms swinging, a gun in one hand. He said:

"I'll kill that lecherous lump of flesh before I'll let him get out of here with those . . ."

Sarah's hand came out of her purse. A bullet singed Ben Todd's red hair. He stopped in the middle of a stride. His eyes popped on the rocky face of the woman. He dropped his gun.

"Sarah!" he said, "Well, I'll be damned!"

"I missed that time," said Sarah, briskly, skidding Ben Todd's gun across the floor with her foot. "Sit down, young feller. Mr. Mullins means money to us."

Ben Todd sat down. Sarah wheeled, strode to the fat man, who had risen with a gun in his hand. She shoved him, and he sat down.

Sarah leaned across the fat man to pick her purse from the desk. When she turned again, there was a roll of money in her hand.

"I've taken a thousand off this for my fee, Mullins," she said. "The rest is yours—four thousand change."

The fat man gaped. He said: "What . . ."

"I figure," said Sarah, "that it ain't safe to take too much money from you, Mullins. With a thousand, maybe I stand a fair chance to go on breathing. With five thousand . . . well, I might meet up with some of your employees on my way out of here, and I'm kind of tired of dodging your hired men, Mullins."

The fat man gurgled. He said:

"Mrs. Watson you are smart—for a woman," and stood up, thrusting the roll of bills into his little black purse and putting the purse in his hip pocket. "Well, that's that," he said unctuously, "and no hard feelings on either side, eh, Mrs. Watson?"

The fat man cackled, winked largely, and walked out.

SARAH fastened her eyes on Ben Todd. She said, softly: "Young feller, I found a shoe button last night. I found it in the room where Mr. Mullins puts people he wants to keep for a while."

Ben Todd got out of his chair. He said: "To hell with your shoe buttons! I've seen you with my own eyes selling blackmail material to that murderer. That's all I need to know about you, you . . ."

Ben Todd finished with a long leap. He landed beside Sarah's desk and grabbed for the phone. Sarah's arm shot out. Her fingers clamped over his wrist.

"That's my telephone, young feller. Who're you aiming to call?"

"I'm going to call the District Attorney, damn you. . . ."

"Not on this phone you ain't. I'm using this phone myself."

Sarah took the receiver off the hook. She gave a number. She said: "Give me the District Attorney, quick. Tell him it's the woman who burgled his house last night, and he'll talk. . . ."

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SARAH stopped talking to the District Attorney and slammed up the phone. She reached for one of the bags cluttering the top of her desk, extracted a large bun, dipped it thoughtfully in the mound of powdery sugar which remained from the day before, and went out of her office, munching vigorously.

A half hour later, she stalked down one of the corridors of the skyscraper office building, paused before a door which said: DISTRICT ATTORNEY, squatted, applied one bristling eyebrow to the mail slit in the door. A moment later, she opened the door and walked in.

She ignored the startled female at the reception desk. She made straight for the red-headed young man sitting alone on a bench against the wall. She said:

"Mullins? Ain't he here yet?"

The red-headed young man stared at her foolishly, blinked, and jerked his thumb at a closed door beside the bench. Sarah left him, peered through the glass panel of the door into the anteroom beyond. She said:

"Good. He's here, and he'll keep," and turned back to Ben Todd.

"Well, squirt," she said, "what're you waiting for?"

"You know damn well what I'm waiting for, and don't think you can stop me. I'm waiting to see the District Attorney."

"Why wait?" said Sarah, gripping his arm. "Come on. I'll take you in."

With Ben Todd in tow, Sarah sailed out and into the corridor. She opened a door marked: PRIVATE. She took Ben Todd with her as she stepped in.

A small, unimpressive man rose from behind an impressive desk. He said: "Madam . . ." and drew in his breath sharply as Ben Todd wrenched loose from Sarah and loped toward the desk.

"Uncle," said Ben Todd, planting himself squarely between Sarah and the District Attorney, "this woman's got a gun. She's thief. She's a double-crossing, blackmailing old . . ."

"Shut up, you whelp," said Sarah firmly. "Mr. District Attorney, where shall I—er—park your nephew?"

The District Attorney sat down, suddenly, his shoulders shaking. He put one hand over his mouth, and motioned with the other to a half-open door behind his desk. Sarah put her hands on Ben Todd's shoulder blades and shoved. A moment later, the door behind the District Attorney's desk was closed and the District Attorney sat alone in his office.

The District Attorney picked up a telephone and said into it:

"I'm ready for Mullins."

A FAT man waddled through the door facing the District Attorney's desk and lowered his large curves to a chair. He said: "Well, Mr. District Attorney! You solved the Barber kidnaping?"

"The Barber murder," said the District Attorney, gently, "was solved some time ago, by the confessions of two men. Unfortunately, those two—ah—underlings of yours, Mr. Mullins, sat too close to a window while making their formal statements. They died, suddenly, of bullet wounds, as you know, before they could sign the papers which would have sent you to the chair for the murder of that child."

The fat man rose abruptly. He said: "I've heard you were yapping that stuff around town. Now, you're going to stop yapping, because I tell you to stop. Take a look at this, Mr. District Attorney."



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The District Attorney took the extended letter, looked at the envelope. Mullins said: "Don't let it burn your fingers. It's pretty hot."

The District Attorney took the letter out of its envelope, unfolded it. He said: "Yes, I wrote that."

Mullins said, unctuously: "Saves time to admit it. I have eight more like it, as hot and hotter, all of 'em addressed to Miss Nina Lovejoy, in Hollywood. I've got 'em in a safe place where I can get 'em if I need 'em. Do we understand each other now, Mr. District Attorney?"

The District Attorney stood up. He said: "If you'll send me the other eight letters, Mr. Mullins, my wife will be glad to have them back."

The fat man took a step forward. He said: "You can't bluff it—"

The District Attorney smiled. He said: "You should inform yourself more fully, Mr. Mullins, before you attempt intimidation and blackmail. Everyone knows—Mrs. Watson knew—that Nina Lovejoy is the stage name of a married woman who recently became infected with the Hollywood germ, and spent some time there. The married woman, Mr. Mullins, is married to me."

The fat man stood still. He said, in small voice: "So . . . well . . . you win this trick, Mr. District Attorney—you and the Watson woman. But get this—you haven't a damn thing on me in the Barber case and you won't get a damn thing on me in the Barber case—"

The door behind the District Attorney's office flew open. Sarah Watson walked through it. The fat man pivoted, made a gesture toward his armpit. Sarah raised a snub-nosed gun in her hand. The fat man's mouth twisted, opened and spat. He said:

"Sold me out, eh, Mrs. Watson? I'll get you for this! I'll get you plenty, you dirty, double-crossing . . ."

A hurricane composed of long limbs and red hair swept out of the door through which Sarah had come, swept past her and struck the fat man. Mr. Mullins sat down, with a hearty smack of flesh on boards. Ben Todd shouted, "I'll teach you to call Sarah Watson dirty names!" and sat down upon Mullins.

Mullins squirmed, rolled. His free hand wriggled into the opening of his coat. Ben Todd's hand followed. The two hands came out of the coat, gripping a gun.

The District Attorney's hand moved toward a row of buttons on his desk. Sarah Watson put stubby fingers over his wrist. She said, hoarsely:

"Never spoil a good fight," and let out a gusty breath.

The gun fell from Mullins' fingers. Ben Todd's right fist began to move up and down with the speed and precision of a trip hammer. Sarah Watson took a step forward. There was an unholy light in her gray eyes.

Ben Todd pinioned Mullins neatly, climbed up on Mullins' front elevation, gripped Mullins' shoulders. Mullins' head began to rise from the floor and fall back upon the floor, with painful regularity. Sarah sighed. She said, regretfully: "Enough, Ben Todd. Stand him up and let's see what he's got on him."

Ben Todd nodded. He drew back his right arm. He delivered one last, painful blow to the countenance of Mullins, and stood up, dragging Mullins with him.

"Maybe he's got some more of the letters on him," said Sarah. "See."

Ben Todd began to pick various articles from Mullins' pockets, tossing



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them upon the District Attorney's desk. The last of the articles was a small, black, bulging purse. Sarah Watson caught it before it struck the desk. She opened the clasp, took out a roll of bills. She said:

"Bless me, these serial numbers look familiar! You'd better call a couple of officers to bear witness, Mr. District Attorney. Sugar Mullins seems to be carrying four thousand dollars' worth of Barber ransom bills in his purse."

"It's a plant!" screamed the fat man.

"It's evidence," said Sarah, "and it will send you to the chair."

SARAH WATSON stalked into her office, followed by Ben Todd. She made for her desk, extracted two buns from a greasy paper bag, handed one to her assistant and bit grimly into the other.

"Sarah!" said Ben Todd, "for the love of God, why didn't you tell me in the beginning what you were doing with Mullins?"

Sarah gulped bun. She said: "Maybe I wanted to find out how far you'd trust me, Bennie."

Ben Todd shuffled his feet. Sarah chuckled. She said: "It's all right, Bennie. I don't trust anybody, either."

"But listen, you old harridan, why did you shoot at me when Mullins was here?"

"Maybe I wanted to see where I'd hit, if I aimed at the floor."

Sarah laid down the bun. She dug into her shabby purse, extended her hand to Ben Todd. A shoe button lay in the palm.

"I told you," she said, "that some day I'd find one of those in a place where the murderer might have taken that child. . . . You listening to me, young feller?"

Ben Todd removed vague eyes from the shoe button. He said: "No. I'm thinking. I'm thinking about my stomach. It's empty. And I don't like buns."

Sarah dropped the shoe button into her purse. She took out a thick wad of bills. She said:

"To hell with the buns! Let's eat."

Ben Todd breathed a word, reverently. He reached out and touched the bills. "How much?" he said.

"Five thousand."

"Five thousand! It can't be five thousand. You gave Mullins four of his five thousand back."

"Mr. Mullins gave me five thousand," said Sarah, "in exchange for the four thousand I stole from the top of the District Attorney's safe last night."

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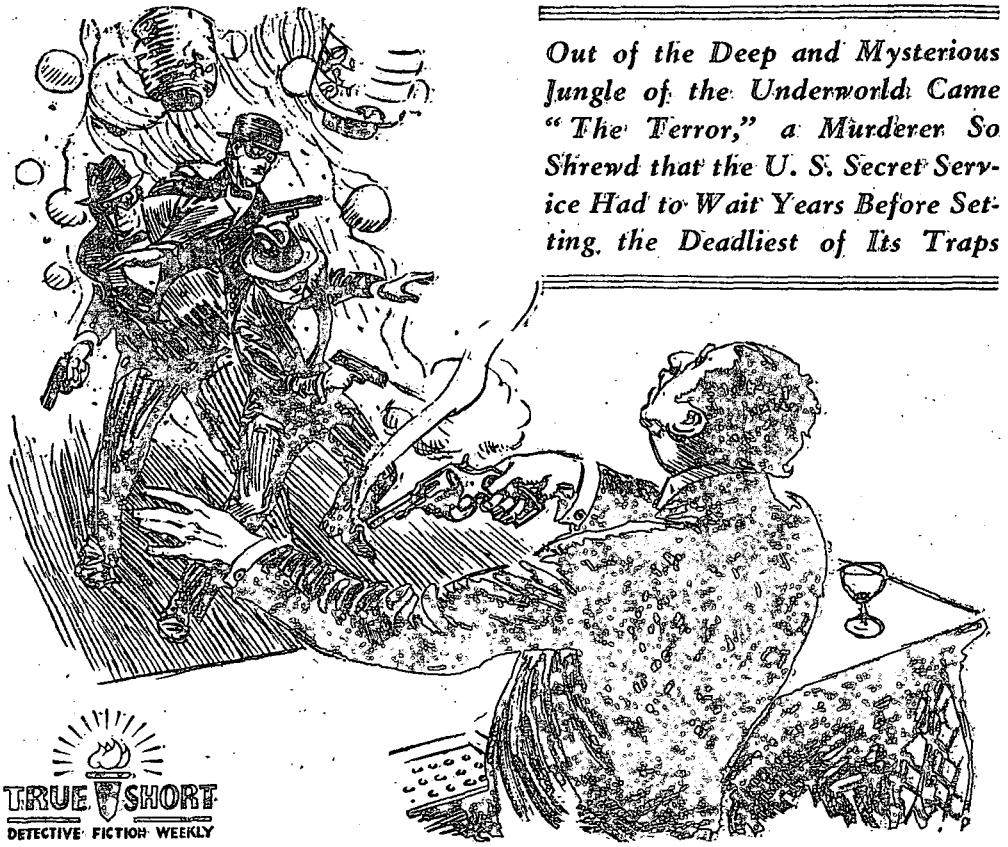
*Out of the Deep and Mysterious Jungle of the Underworld Came "The Terror," a Murderer So Shrewd that the U. S. Secret Service Had to Wait Years Before Setting the Deadliest of Its Traps*



TRUE SHORT DETECTIVE FICTION WEEKLY

Tony was outnumbered; he never had a chance.

# Murder Under Cover

By James W. Booth

THEY sat in the back room of a saloon in Juarez, Mexico, across the muddy, lazy Rio Grande from El Paso, and made their bargain. The room was hot and thick with smoke, but they were alone, the two of them, one slender and flashily dressed, the other tall, lanky and more modestly attired, and no one was about to eavesdrop. The flashily dressed one had seen to that. He knew how to pick such spots, and his henchmen, too. Or so he thought.

"You'll look after things down here for a while," he said. "Then, when things are set, I'll take you North for the killing. It'll be the biggest crime ever pulled. How about it? Are you in?"

"Why not?" answered the other. "Only suckers turn down easy dough."

A sardonic grin creased the slender one's lips. "Right," he agreed, and raised the whisky before him.

They sealed the pact with a straight one and, at the same time, the flashily-dressed man sealed his doom. With the draining of that drink the electric chair



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at Sing Sing was literally made ready for him.

"But no double-crossing," he added, as an afterthought. "I kill those who double-cross me." He said it in a biting, merciless tone. He did just that, too. He had done so many times.

Alex Bogdanoff was his name. In Buffalo, New York, where he headed the infamous Blue Ribbon Gang, he was known as "The Terror." He wasn't much to look at physically. Just a slender little man in his early thirties, but he had the eyes of a killer and a heart of stone.

Killing caused him no compunction. Nor did it bother him in the least to watch the death writhings of a victim, especially if he thought the victim had double-crossed him, or was about to. He let them die slow, agonizing deaths, and then stowed their bodies away where no one would find them and start asking embarrassing questions.

His favorite method was to soak their bodies in wet concrete and then, when it hardened, have them dumped far out in Lake Erie. On other occasions, when he suspected henchmen of treachery, he resorted to the sinister procedure of trussing them securely with heavy wire and tossing them over Niagara Falls.

Stanley Bartowiak, one of his satellites, who talked too much under the influence of drink for The Terror's comfort, met his end that way. And there was a woman named Jean, too. Alex suspected her of two-timing him. He suggested a rendezvous at a cabin he maintained at Crystal Beach, on the Canadian side of Lake Erie, and she agreed. She never returned. Her limp, lifeless body went over the Falls instead.

He suspected Zigmund "Ziggy" Plocharski, another of his mob, of holding out on him after their robbery of the Spirella Corset Company at Niagara Falls, New York, and Plocharski met a violent death. His corpse was encased in concrete and lowered to a watery grave.

Andrew Borse, a small-time bootlegger, known as "The Sheik" in Buffalo's underworld haunts, gained The Terror's ill-favor and succumbed with a bullet in his brain. His skeleton, attired in fine clothes, but with all identification marks removed, was found dumped in a roadside thicket near Oakfield, New York.

To rid himself of one John Corbin, Little Alex resorted to a bit of double-crossing on his own account. They had contracted to blow up a building in Niagara Falls. It was to be an insurance job. Bogdanoff tampered with the fuses and the bombs went off ahead of time. Corbin wasn't killed, but he was trapped by falling rafters and débris and arrested. He drew twenty years for arson, and The Terror grinned sardonically.

BOGDANOFF was heartless, cruel and ruthless. He hated policemen, and bragged of the number he had killed. He robbed a lumber camp in Alberta, Canada, north of Edmonton, and killed a Constable of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police in making his escape. In Kansas City, Mo., where he robbed a bank of $32,000, he left a policeman lying dead in the street. In Brooklyn, N. Y., another fell before his barrage of leadened slugs. Still another died because of his gun fire in Niagara Falls.

He was suspected of more than fifty major crimes—bank robberies, jewel robberies, loft hold-ups, safe jobs, department store hold-ups, murder and arson — committed in Canada and

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throughout the United States, in St. Louis, Chicago, Detroit, Brooklyn, New York and Buffalo. But only once was he arrested and convicted, prior to his final downfall. That was for a loft job in New York City.

Then the prison authorities discovered what a hard-boiled, incorrigible criminal he was. He created such a disturbance in Sing Sing that it was necessary to transfer him to Great Meadows. But he didn't behave himself any better there. He was still unruly, arrogant, defiant.

Again he was switched, this time to Dannemora, and finally to Auburn. He was lodged behind the grim walls of the up-State bastile when a parole was granted him and, scowling darkly, he stepped out of stir. Out to continue his blazing of as sordid a trail as any in the book of crime.

With his release he made his headquarters in Buffalo. But while he engaged in all manner of crimes there, it was not until sometime after January 1, 1928, some two years after his parole from Auburn, that the Buffalo police came to know the sinister being he was.

Early in 1928 Buffalo became too hot for Little Alex. There was a shooting fray at the Peacock Inn on New Year's Eve in which he killed the proprietor, Tony George, and received two leadened slugs himself.

It all started over a woman. Bogdanoff, The Terror, was a sucker for the females—and for the spinning roulette wheel. During his mad career his loot ran to more than a half-million dollars. But when he was finally arrested and brought to trial he did not have enough money to hire a lawyer. He had to ask the court to assign counsel. Women and gambling had gotten the majority of the split of the loot.

Through Buffalo that New Year's Eve a big black touring car, with curtains drawn, rolled slowly. In it were three hard-visaged men, all heavily armed. All were out of tune with the merrymaking in the streets, the cafés and the speakeasies. They were out to kill.

At first one night resort and then another the big car stopped. Each time the three alighted and strode in, each with one hand in his pocket, where an automatic rested, ready for instant use.

"Is Roger Lavin here?" was always the query of the smaller of the trio, Little Alex.

And always when the answer was "No," his curt rejoinder was, "Well, we're goin' to be certain," and they would carefully scrutinize the merrymakers.

BUT at two o'clock in the morning they had not yet located the man they sought. The man, a small fry bootlegger, whom The Terror wanted to kill simply because the report had been brought to him that his woman of the moment had been seen with him.

"Why not try the Peacock?" said one. "He may be there."

The big black touring car rolled to a stop before the Peacock Inn on Washington Street, and again the three alighted. Little Alex walked briskly across the sidewalk toward the brightly lighted entrance, then suddenly swung about and retraced his steps to the car. The other two did likewise.

"This is the last spot," Bogdanoff said huskily. "He's bound to be here if he's out anywhere tonight and there's no use showing our faces."

The trio were masked when they pushed into the Peacock, where the pretty hat check girl, Clara Schrader, confronted them. Perhaps she thought the masks were in keeping with the

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New Year's Eve festivities. Perhaps instinct told her they were gunmen. It doesn't matter. But if she realized the latter she did not flinch.

"I'm sorry," she stated, with a smile, "but there is no admittance, gentlemen, unless you are accompanied by ladies."

The Terror smirked. "That's your story, sister," he snarled, and pushed her roughly aside.

Eugene Brunner, the floor manager, came rushing forward.

"No, gentlemen, you can't. It's the rule of the club!" he exclaimed. "Now, please—"

An instant later he had been swung around and sent sprawling to the floor.

The three brigands pushed past him, Little Alex in the lead. Their automatics were out now. They barged into the crowded dining room.

"Everyone sit still," Bogdanoff ordered. "Don't get excited. This isn't a stick-up. We're just looking for someone. For a rat named Lavin, Roger Lavin. Is he here?"

No one answered—not just then. They went through the place hunting for Lavin, as they had done in so many other places that night, but, as was the case in the others, he wasn't there.

They started out and then, as they were almost to the door, someone flung a torrent of blasphemy in their direction. Little Alex wheeled about and started back. His eye glinted hard beneath his mask. His finger tightened on his gun trigger. Someone else joined in assailing them.

"Pitch the mugs out," was the cry.

Tony George slipped behind the bar and grabbed a revolver. He watched Bogdanoff stride slowly to the center of the dance floor and then raised the gun and fired twice. The two bullets tore into Little Alex's thigh as he swayed momentarily. Then his gun spat fire. A single bullet drilled George in the heart, and he died instantly.

Instantly his two confederates opened fire. Shots ricocheted across the crowded night club, wounding a half dozen of the revelers and throwing the whole place into wild confusion. Women screamed hysterically and fainted. Men swore lustily and sought safety from the bullets beneath the tables, pulling their women down with them.

Although bleeding profusely, Little Alex succeeded in getting out of the Peacock Inn before the police arrived. In Buffalo he hid out until his wounds healed, undisturbed by the police, because the gangster code of a "closed mouth" held good for a time and no one squealed until later. Then he slipped quietly out of the city and headed South to Mexico and a new sphere of crime. En route he prepared for the new venture by taking a course in photo-engraving.

BUT the tall, lanky, modestly attired man in the back room of the Juarez saloon did not know of his murders and his robberies. He didn't know his real name at the time, for Bogdanoff was using an alias. All he knew at the moment was that Little Alex was preparing to launch forth as a counterfeiter, and that was all that interested him.

For he was an undercover man of the United States Secret Service.

Unsung heroes are these men. They comprise a small, select band of experts who carry on for Uncle Sam—in the Secret Service, the Narcotics Bureau, the Customs Service and other Federal criminal tracking agencies—in the mysterious jungle of the underworld.

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They miss the headlines and the glory, yet take their lives in their hands at almost every turn. Instant death would be theirs should their identity become known to gangdom. Their names are secret to all except certain of their superiors. They never show their face in court. They never take the witness stand. Yet they furnish the evidence which puts many a criminal—counterfeiter, dope dealer, smuggler and others of their kind—behind the bars of a Federal penitentiary.

The records of their exploits are packed with adventure, daring, intrigue and suspense. But probably none more exemplifies the risk they take than the case of Alex "The Terror" Bogdanoff.

The Secret Service undercover man picked up Bogdanoff in the devious byways of Juarez and time and again followed him across the International Bridge into El Paso. Little Alex didn't know he was being followed, but then, shadowing a quarry was an art with the Federal man. The gangster-killer would have had to possess a sixth sense to know the Government operative was on his trail.

The Terror had not circulated any counterfeit money as yet. But he had set up his plant in the Mexican city and tried his hands at manufacturing a few bogus bills. But he had not been satisfied with his workmanship and had destroyed them.

The Secret Service man knew all this. It was his business to know such things. And he knew, also, that some day his quarry would strike off a bill that would be to his liking and then they would start flowing across the border. So he stuck close to Little Alex.

Several times they bumped into each other in dives in Juarez and in speakeasies in El Paso. And, after a while, they became acquainted. Bogdanoff, priding himself on his knowledge of criminals, took the undercover operative to be one of his own kind.

"You're hot, aren't you?" he inquired one night.

The Federal man started, then scowled. "What is it to you?" he demanded.

Little Alex grinned. "Nothing," he answered, "but—"

He didn't finish the sentence. He didn't think it wise. He wasn't rushing things. But, just the same, he felt the man had the "makings" and that he could make use of him. It wasn't until several meetings later that he said so, however.

"I think we can get together," he declared. "What do you say?"

"It all depends," replied the other, warily. "Perhaps we can, perhaps we can't. What's the proposition?"

They met in Juarez—in the back room of the saloon—and talked it over. The result was that the Secret Service undercover man agreed to join with Little Alex, The Terror, and they sealed the bargain with a drink.

A month, then two, went by without anything happening. Bogdanoff continued to experiment with his photo-engraving process and his counterfeit bills, but still he refrained from circulating any of them. He hadn't yet struck off one that suited his fancy, and the undercover man was commencing to wonder whether he ever would. And then one day, early in the Summer of 1929, the bandit-killer announced that he was going back to Buffalo.

"I won't be gone long," he said. "I just want to get things lined up, then I'll be back and I'll take you up with me. I'll send you some money though, for things we'll need, just as soon as I can turn a job up there.

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"What sort of things?" The undercover man was thinking in terms of inks and papers.

"Machine guns and gas masks," Little Alex told him. "It might be a good idea for you to scout around and find out where we can pick them up cheap down here."

The Secret Service man didn't know where machine guns and gas masks figured in counterfeiting, but he wasn't overlooking any bets.

## II

TO the late Robert L. Godby, then head of the New York Office of the United States Secret Service, the Secret Service man sent a full confidential report of Bogdanoff's movements and operations in Juarez, his description, where he would be located in Buffalo, and what his activities were likely to be there.

Counterfeiting had been rife in the Lake Erie city that Spring, but Godby and his crack assistant, Tom Daly, had stamped it out. They had staged a series of raids, seized a quantity of counterfeiting equipment, presses, plates, inks and paper, as well as more than $20,000 worth of bogus bills, and broken up four distinct gangs.

Now, with the undercover man's report, Godby visioned a renewal of counterfeiting in Buffalo, with Bogdanoff as the brains of the racket. With Daly, he hastened upstate to investigate.

It did not take the two Federal men long to locate their quarry and learn his right name. They found him hiding out at 116 Fay Street, but they did not clamp down on him. After all, he was still outside the Federal fold, for as yet he had not engaged in counterfeiting. All they could do was to "tail" him and be ready to take him into custody the moment he started circulating bogus bills.

The more they shadowed him and the two thugs he was constantly with—Stephen "Big Bob," Grezechowiak and Max "The Goose" Rybarczyk—the more they doubted that he was going to engage in counterfeiting.

"Somehow he doesn't appear to be the type to me," Godby said. "I'd say robbery or murder was more in his line."

"The other bruisers certainly fit the picture," Daly replied. "And those machine guns and gas masks Bogdanoff wanted to buy strengthens the theory."

Godby nodded.

"Yes," he declared, "but we haven't heard any more about that. Perhaps he's forgotten all about our man in El Paso."

But Bogdanoff hadn't.

Lack of sufficient funds was all that prevented him from going through with his plans. "We failed last Saturday, but next week we're going to make a big haul," he wrote his supposed confederate on the border.

His words were promptly relayed back to Godby in code.

"Now, what do you make of this?" Godby demanded. And then, before Daly could offer a reply, he said, "Get me last Saturday's papers and perhaps we'll have the answer."

But while they carefully went over every edition of the Buffalo newspapers of that day and the following one, they were still puzzled as to the meaning of Bogdanoff's letter.

"The only thing I see is this," Godby said, pointing to a brief account of an unsuccessful attempt to rob an automobile accessory store.

"There's no tie-up with counterfeiting," Daly declared.

"No, but remember Little Alex and

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his two confederates look more like killers than counterfeiters."

Daly rubbed his chin thoughtfully. "Okay," he said. "What's our next step?"

"We'll wait and see what happens."

MURDER happened, swift and merciless. Ferdinand Fechter, innocent, obliging, fifty-two-year-old proprietor of a soda grill at East Delavan and Northumberland Avenues, was the victim. And with his slaying, Little Alex The Terror again vanished from Buffalo.

Fechter's grill adjoined the Fisher Body and Chevrolet factories and his customers were largely employees of the two plants. They were paid each Saturday, and paid by check, and it was Fechter's custom to cash their checks for them. He found that it was good business. It brought the men into his place and, invariably, they spent more money there than they would otherwise have done. But on Saturday, July 27, it proved to be decidedly poor business—for Fechter.

Shortly after 10.30 o'clock he drove to the nearby branch of the Liberty Bank at Delavan and Bailey Avenues and drew out $9,000. It was considerable money to carry about unguarded, but robbery had never occurred to him. He had been doing the same thing for so many Saturdays without interruption that he had never thought about taking along a bodyguard.

FECHTER parked his automobile in front of his home, which was across the street from the grill. He noticed that his wife and two daughters were sitting on the front porch and waved cheerily to them. Then he reached into the car and picked up the satchel containing the money.

As he did so, a maroon Essex coach roared down Delavan Avenue. Brakes shrieked, and the car slid to a stop beside his automobile. Three hard-faced men leaped out, leaving the motor running, and bore down on him.

One grabbed for the satchel, and instantly Fechter went berserk. He closed with the desperado, flailing him savagely with the bag he held in his hand and crying wildly for help. It was a valiant attempt to defend himself, but it was in vain.

For one of the trio, a slender little man, with hard, expressionless eyes, whipped out an automatic and fired point-blank at him. The bullet tore in Fechter's side and coursed downward through his abdomen. Fechter reeled crazily, a crimson stain filling his shirt, but held fast to the money bag.

Again the little thug fired. It was deliberate, cold-blooded slaughter. The second bullet caught Fechter in the head. He crashed to his face on the side walk, his eyes goggling horribly, and lay still.

"Get the money," the little killer shouted.

One of his confederates snatched up the bag, and the three raced for the waiting coach. The little killer slipped behind the steering wheel. There was the nauseating screech of meshing gears, next the mad roar of the motor. The car leaped ahead, careened wildly for a moment, then straightened its course and sped down Delavan Avenue.

Later it was found abandoned, and also found to be a stolen car. But there was no trace of the three killers.

Godby and Daly looked grimly at one another when they heard about the savage crime. Was this the "big haul" Little Alex had referred to? There was only their suspicions, but they were greatly strengthened by the fact that Bogdanoff had suddenly disappeared

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from the Bay Street address. But suspicions are one thing, proof another.

Two days later, however, they had proof. For Monday brought another report from the undercover man in El Paso. It stated that Bogdanoff had just telegraphed him two hundred dollars from St. Louis and advised him that he was returning to the border.

Godby didn't waste any time. He secured the serial numbers of the stolen bills and immediately put through a long-distance telephone call to the St. Louis office of the United States Secret Service. Less than an hour later the telegraph office from which The Terror had sent the two hundred dollars was located and the money identified as of the Fechter loot.

Now Godby had a problem on his hands. Bogdanoff's crime was distinctly not a Federal one. It was wholly a matter for the Buffalo police. But with the Secret Service tied in so closely with Little Alex through the activities of the undercover man on the border, Godby was reluctant to step out of the case altogether. He felt that justice would be more speedily served if the Secret Service and the Buffalo police worked together. But first he had to have instructions from Chief William H. Moran, of the Secret Service in Washington.

Chief Moran was brief and direct. "Turn all your evidence over to the Buffalo police," he ordered Godby, "but stick to the case until those rats are strapped in the chair."

It was precisely what the alert Godby wanted to do. Closeted with Police Commissioner James W. Higgins, Austin J. Roche, Chief of Detectives, John G. Reville, Assistant Chief of Detectives, and other high police officers, the Secret Service man disclosed all the evidence he had assembled.

"Bogdanoff!" Higgins, Roche and Reville exclaimed almost in one breath when Godby mentioned The Terror's name.

"Know him?" the Secret Service man asked.

COMMISSIONER HIGGINS nodded grimly. "He's a bad one, Mr. Godby; cruel and merciless, and clever, too. We know, because we've had occasion to check his record rather carefully since we learned through underworld sources that it was he who killed Tony George and wounded several others in the Peacock Inn here in Buffalo."

He proceeded to tell Godby about the affair and of Bogdanoff's amazing criminal record. Until then the Secret Service man had had no occasion to concern himself with The Terror's many homicides and burglaries.

"Rybarczyk and Grezechowiak are equally bad ones," Reville asserted. "We'll get Rogues' Gallery pictures of the three of them and have the Fechter women try and identify them."

Commissioner Higgins looked thoughtfully at Godby. "The Secret Service has the inside track on this case," he stated, "and we'd like to have you work with us. We'll give you every possible coöperation."

Godby's eyes flashed. "The question is, what procedure to follow," he said grimly. "Of course we can have Bogdanoff arrested when he reaches El Paso and extradited, and we can pick up the other two muggs. But, personally, I'd rather follow a different course. I believe Bogdanoff will play right into our hands if we do."

"What would you suggest?" the Commissioner asked.

"Well, first, I'd have it leak out indirectly that you are up against a stone

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wall on the Fechter case, that it has the department completely baffled and you have no suspects."

"The newspapers will cry to high heaven!" Higgins exclaimed. "They are riding us already. They did so unmercifully with the Peacock Inn case."

"Fine," Godby answered. "Let them cry. It's exactly what we want them to do. You see, as I analyze Bogdanoff, he is a would-be smart guy. He thinks it is an easy matter for him to put it over on the authorities. Now, if he believes you are getting nowhere on the investigation and that he isn't suspected, he'll get cocky and return to Buffalo.

"Remember, before he left El Paso he told our undercover man that he would be back and bring him North next time. For the biggest crime ever pulled. If he follows that plan, and the fact that he telegraphed the two hundred dollars indicates he intends to, we'll have a close contact every minute. We'll have one of our men right in his mob, and we'll tie him right into the chair. And Big Bob and The Goose, also.

"As things stand now, we are convinced he's guilty. There's the hot money, and in all probability Mrs. Fechter and her daughters will be able to identify the Rogues' Gallery pictures. But it isn't evidence enough. A shrewd criminal lawyer might be able to riddle our evidence, and we can't afford to take that chance."

SO, it was arranged. Word was allowed to leak out that the police were stumped on the Fechter case, and the newspapers howled about police inefficiency and Buffalo's crime wave.

While they howled Fechter's widow and her daughters identified Rogues' Gallery pictures of Little Alex, Rybarczyk and Grezechowiak as the three killers. But the identification was kept secret.

And down in El Paso, Bogdanoff, confident that he had staged a perfect crime, made plans to return again to the Lake Erie city and bring the Secret Service undercover man with him.

"The cops are dumb up there," he said, scornfully. "We got away with a swell haul right under their noses, but it was nothing compared to the one we're going to pull this time."

But he was reluctant to divulge any particulars about either crime, and the undercover man was too clever to question him about them. He did not want to arouse The Terror's suspicions by being inquisitive. Furthermore, he knew that in time he would have all the information he needed.

They started for Buffalo the middle of August. All the way from the Texas city to Manhattan Transfer of the Pennsylvania Railroad, between Newark, N. J., and New York City, they were shadowed by another Secret Service operative.

For Godby wasn't taking any chances. The undercover man was unknown to him, and he realized there would be no telling when he would be able to communicate with him once he arrived in Buffalo. The Terror would immediately become suspicious if his "confederate" started going around in a strange city and making mysterious telephone calls.

It might mean his death, for it was well known that Little Alex would tolerate no double-crossing, and the collapse of the carefully laid plans to trap the three Fechter killers.

But he had to know the moment Bogdanoff arrived in Buffalo and

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where he was hiding out. It was essential to the success of the entire undertaking. It was for that reason that he had had them "tailed" all the way from El Paso.

However, at Manhattan Transfer, Little Alex shook his shadow. It wasn't that he was aware he was being followed and had intentionally slipped away from his "tail." It was purely accidental. The Secret Service man figured that Bogdanoff would travel through to Pennsylvania Station. Instead, The Terror suddenly transferred to a Hudson Tube train for downtown New York. He wasn't taking any chances of having the New York police pick him up at the railroad station.

But the Buffalo police met him the moment he set foot in the Lake Erie city. For as soon as the Secret Service operative missed him in New Jersey he wired Godby in Buffalo.

Immediately the Secret Service chief ordered the two crack Buffalo detectives, Sergeants John J. Whalen, now Chief of Detectives, and William Burns, who had been assigned to assist him, to post men at all railroad stations and all highways leading into the city. Each man chosen familiarized himself with Bogdanoff's Rogues' Gallery picture so that he would know The Terror by sight. All were men with a camera eye. Their orders were not to arrest him, but to tail him and his supposed confederate to their hideout.

## III

TWO men stationed at the Lackawanna depot picked up the wily killer when he arrived in the Lake Erie city and trailed him to the Fay Street address, where he went into hiding, along with the Secret Service undercover man.

For the next week Godby and Daly hovered in the vicinity of the house, hoping for an opportunity to make a contact with their colleague and identify themselves. But none came. Neither Bogdanoff nor his supposed confederate emerged from the house. The two Secret Service men fidgeted and continued to keep the place under constant surveillance.

Ten days went by, and then one morning, when Godby was shadowing the hideout, a man emerged from the house. He had a little girl by the hand. Godby saw at once that the man was the undercover operative. The little girl, he imagined, was Grezechowiak's young daughter. But her presence worried him. He did not know how he would be able to contact his man without her noticing it.

Then, suddenly, he had an idea.

Quickly he scribbled his name and phone number on the inside of a book of matches and waited for the undercover man and his little companion to start back to the house.

Then he walked leisurely toward him, taking out a cigarette, as he did so, and apparently fumbling in his pocket for a match. The book with the code message on it was hidden in the palm of his hand.

"Could I trouble you for a match?" he asked, innocently.

A quick look of understanding passed between the two, as the undercover man complied with the request. Godby struck a match, lit his cigarette, and then cleverly switched the folders.

"Thanks," he said briefly, handing back the one which had been secreted in the palm of his hand, and continued down the street.

Again there was a period of waiting. But when the undercover man finally reported he not only had evidence link-

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ing The Terror with several of Buffalo's unsolved crimes, but also information that the big crime Little Alex was planning was the robbery of a Federal Reserve Bank armored truck.

It was to be Buffalo's biggest and most sensational crime. More than a half dozen persons were to be murdered in cold blood in order to insure its success, and the mobsters planned to escape with more than a half million dollars in loot.

"There is going to be no slip-up in this," Bogdanoff bragged. "We're not going to strike until everything is set. We're going to have every possible getaway route mapped in advance. We're going to know exactly how much is in the truck, right down to the last penny. Then we're going to blast out the two motorcycle cops that always precede the trucks and kill the driver, too. And the fellows inside if they make any funny moves." He paused and scowled in thought. "No," he went on, "I guess we better kill them, too, whether they get funny or not. We don't want anyone living who'll be able to put the finger on us."

"How are we going to know how much is in the truck? Grezechowiak wanted to know. "A lot of guys have stuck up trucks, killed a few coppers and guards, and then found there was no jack in the thing."

The Terror grinned. "That's where the brains come in," he said. "A job like this can't be pulled without brains, and I've got the brains."

He turned his head and appraised the Government undercover man. "How are we going to know how much is in the truck?" he repeated. Then he laughed grimly. "That's easy," he went on. "You're going to tell us." And he pointed a finger at the Federal operative.

The Secret Service man felt his heart skip a beat, but not a muscle of his face moved. He successfully masked the excitement he felt. Did Little Alex suspect him?

"How am I going to do that?" he asked quietly.

Little Alex laughed again. "I've got the brains," he boasted once more, "but you look as though you had 'em, too. You've got the front, and that's just what we need. Furthermore, none of the cops know you. So, you're going to get a job in the bank and tip us off when a juicy shipment is expected."

Bogdanoff laid his plans well, but he did not hurry them. Carefully, he recruited his mobsters, and then rented a house at 9 Franklin Street, Sloan, N. Y., just outside of Buffalo, as a new hideout. At a farm at Marilla he set up a pistol range and there the gang got in trim for the murderous assault they planned. Their target was a toy policeman's badge. Little Alex took a fiendish delight in shooting at it, and insisted that every member of the mob be able to put six leadened slugs through it in succession before the robbery was staged.

"We don't want to waste any bullets on those coppers," he stated. "When we shoot we want to be certain we kill."

NIGHT after night the mobsters gathered in the basement of the Sloan hideout and discussed plans for the robbery. And all the while Godby and Daly, Detective Sergeants Whalen and Burns, and other police officers lay in the grass outside the low cellar windows, watched, listened and heard much.

"The Goose did a neat trick fingering that last job," someone said.

"You mean Fechter?" Bogdanoff inquired. The other nodded.

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"I'll say he did. The Goose is okay. But did you see how I pumped the old guy. There wasn't any wasting bullets, was there?"

A carmine-lipped blonde sitting in the corner, nursing a drink of straight gin, spoke up.

"Say, Alex, whatever happened to your girl friend, Jean?" she wanted to know.

The Terror scowled slightly. "She's resting," he answered.

Big Bob laughed hollowly. "Yeh, she's resting all right," he said. "—at the bottom of the lake."

Bogdanoff snapped, "Shut up." His face was livid. Then, quickly, his expression changed and he grinned.

"She talked too much," he announced. "Stanley did, too, and Ziggy tried the double-cross. He hasn't been around for a while, either. Remember that, everyone. Little Alex doesn't like people who talk too much or those who try the two-time stuff."

The Secret Service men and the police heard much, but they did not immediately swoop down on the gangsters. There were two reasons for this. For one thing, Rybarczyk as yet had not moved out to the Sloan hideout. He was still living with his family at 250 Wilson Street, in Buffalo's Little Poland. Godby wanted all three of the Fechter killers to be together when the arrests were made. He had lain his plans too carefully to run the risk of any one of them slipping through his net.

The other reason was the undercover man's presence with the mob. He wanted him out of the way when the attack was made. It had been easy to secure him the semblance of a job with the Federal Reserve Bank, but Bogdanoff insisted that he return to Sloan each night and report.

At length, however, the Secret Service operative convinced Little Alex that his hours had been changed, necessitating his arrival at the bank early in the morning, and prevailed upon him to allow him to take a furnished room in Buffalo.

Then only Rybarczyk's presence at the hideout was all that was needed before the authorities would strike. But the gangster continued to live in the city, and Godby commenced to fidget.

He was keen for action. Finally, he could stand the waiting no longer and went into conference with Commissioner Higgins and Chief of Detectives Reville.

"Perhaps Rybarczyk isn't going to join Alex out there at Sloan," he said. "Anyway, we can't afford to wait any longer. Now, this is what we'll do. Your men have Rybarczyk under surveillance, haven't they?"

"All the time," Reville said.

"Good. How many of them?"

"Two."

"All right. Increase the number to four. That ought to be enough. Now tonight grab Rybarczyk, but don't lodge him in jail until tomorrow morning. There is no telling what time we'll strike out at Sloan and we don't want Bogdanoff to get wind of Rybarczyk's arrest. It might spoil our plans."

Higgins nodded knowingly.

"We'll see to it that he's taken for a nice long ride," he said.

IT was nearing eight o'clock that night—the night of September 8—when Rybarczyk emerged from his house. He stood on the front porch for several minutes, chatting with a man on the next door stoop, and then started down the street toward the corner tailor shop.

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As he did so a big sedan, bearing Detective Sergeants Whalen and Burns and Police Sergeants Fitzgerald and Johnson rolled to a stop at the curb and the four leaped out. Quickly they bore down on the gangster.

"What the—" was his startled exclamation as Whalen grabbed him. But he didn't finish it.

For the next instant he was being hurtled into the back of the big automobile. Burns and Johnson had grabbed his feet, Whalen and Fitzgerald his arms, and, like a bag of flour, they had flung him into the car. They piled in after him, and the car roared away.

Rybarczyk tried to struggle and break away. He kicked and scratched and struck wild blows. But it was no use. Burns forced him down on the back seat. Johnson grabbed his hands, and Whalen clicked handcuffs on his wrists.

Twelve hours later he was deposited at Police Headquarters and charged with the murder of Ferdinand Fechter. A good portion of that time the officers had kept him at the Zoo in Delaware Park.

Meanwhile, as darkness settled over Sloan, Godby led a little band of heavily-armed men to the hide-out where The Terror and "Big Bob" Grezechowiak were staying. They stealthily circled the place, and then waited. There was no attempt to crash in.

They knew they had dangerous killers to contend with, and they planned to lay down a tear gas barrage and take the killers unawares, temporarily blinding them with the stinging vapors and making their much-boasted marksmanship of little avail.

All through the long hours they waited in the darkness, carefully concealed from view, so that their presence could not be detected from the house or by too-inquisitive passers-by, anxious for the zero hour to come.

The lights which had been burning downstairs in the house were suddenly extinguished, leaving the place in total darkness. The officers, lurking in the shadows, became more alert. Gripping their revolvers they sensed that someone was about to emerge from the house. But no one came.

Instead, a light flashed on in an upstairs room. After a time it, too, went out.

The minutes ticked into hours. The strain of waiting commenced to tell. And then, close on to three o'clock, Godby passed the word along to "close in."

Out of the shadows moved the manhunters, more than a dozen of them. They proceeded cautiously. Not a word was spoken above a whisper. Everything was carried out according to previously issued instructions. Twenty-five feet from the dwelling they halted, while one crept forward with tear gas bombs in his hands.

He went straight ahead until he stood beneath an open window on the second floor. Then he drew back his arm, after the fashion of a pitcher on the mound, paused momentarily, and then sent a bomb humming through the air toward the window above. His aim was true. He had had experience with bombs of more deadly nature on the battlefields of France. It fell inside the room. Another followed, then another.

ORDERS were to wait and see what happened. Orders also were to shoot only if necessary. It was proposed to take Bogdanoff and Grezechowiak alive, if possible.

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There was not long to wait. The front door of the house swung open, and Big Bob, his wife and daughter rushed out, coughing and gasping for breath. The officers quickly captured them. But there was no sign of Little Alex.

They waited, but still he did not appear. They knew he could not have escaped.

The net flung around the house was too tightly woven for any man to squirm through it.

He was somewhere in the gas-filled house.

"We're going in," Godby shouted.

Donning gas masks, he, Daly and the police burst into the house. Flashlights stirred up fantastic shadows in the darkened rooms. Then, someone found the electric light switch and snapped it on.

Bogdanoff was nowhere on the first floor. Detectives started for the basement, while Godby and Daly rushed upstairs.

They dashed from bedroom to bedroom, but he was not in any of them. Only the unfinished attic remained, hot, stuffy and gas-filled.

Cautiously, they crept up the stairs, their automatics in readiness.

The attic, too, appeared to be deserted.

"Careful," Godby said, as Daly flashed his light about.

Then a racking cough came from the eaves. With two bounds the Secret Service men were across the room.

Again the cough. Then a choked, "Damn you, copper."

Little Alex lay on his belly under the eaves, his nose pressed against a tiny drain opening.

Two machine guns lay on the floor beside him.

He raised his head, gasped, and made a dizzy effort to grab one of them.

But the gas had been too much for him to withstand.

A fit of violent coughing seized him before he could reach it.

The next instant Godby had an automatic shoved in his ribs, and Daly had snatched aside the two Tommy-guns.

Justice moved fast from then on. The three killers were speedily brought to trial before Judge George H. Rowe in the Erie County Court, were convicted of the wanton murder of Ferdinand Fechter and sentenced to die in the electric chair at Sing Sing.

Little Alex, the Terror, spent his last days in the death cell protesting that both Max, The Goose, and Big Bob were innocent of the crime, and copying verses of various authors on the masonry walls with crayon. One was titled "Fate," another, of his own composition, minimized the sorrows and burdens of life.

They died on the night of July 17, 1930.

Rybarczky went first, then Grezechowiak, and finally Bogdanoff. He was strapped in the chair at 11:16 o'clock.

But first, he made a statement.

"Gentlemen," he said, "the State of New York has just killed two innocent men. I tried to save them, but my word was no good."

His word wasn't any good then, because it had been good when he divulged all the particulars of the crime to his supposed confederate, the tall, lanky man, whom he had become acquainted with in Juarez and who he believed was one of his kind—the undercover operative of the United States Secret Service.



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# Time *and* Tide

"Doctor Shale," asked McLee, "could it have been done from the open porthole?"

By Carl Clausen

DETECTIVE SHORT

*Lieutenant McLee Didn't Know a Chain Hook from a Davit, but He Had an Unerring Instinct for Ferreting Out Murderers . . . !*

"I DON'T know what I'd do without you on this waterfront assignment," said Laird McLee to me, as he guided the heavy police car through the push-cart traffic of the lower East side and swung into East Street on a left-hand turn. "This guy, Davy Jones, has got a lot of shots in his locker." He slowed up abreast of one of the East River piers where three vessels lay moored, end to end. "Which one of them is a barque, and why?"

"The one in the middle," said I. "A barque has three masts with yards on the fore and main—the two front masts to you. That's your ship, all right. The Endymion. Nice little hooker. One of the last of her kind flying the Stars and Stripes."

"Sounds like a Greek hash joint to me," he retorted. "Endymion!"

We walked up the gang-plank. The deck was deserted. She was a small iron barque of six hundred tons or so, with foc'sle and galley of teak wood, re-



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cently holy-stoned, and her bright-work polished and shining.

"Anybody home?" McLee sang out. "I mean—Ship, ahoy!" he amended with a wink at me.

There was no answer. We went aft to the break of the poop and climbed the ladder. The companion-way scuttle was open. McLee tugged at his belt from which his police pistol was suspended, and I followed him down the scuttle. The mess-room, lighted by a barred skylight, overhead, was all white and gilt and clean as a whistle. The table solid teak wood. In the center of it stood a bowl of golden Gloire de Dijon roses. The brass cuddy lamp, polished and trimmed, swung slowly in its gimbals as the vessel moved in the cut-water of a passing tug, dragging a string of barges up river.

"Must be a woman aboard," said I.

"The chief said something about a daughter," McLee replied. At that moment, the door of one of the state-rooms opened. A girl stood in the open doorway looking at us. She was the kind you read about. Hair the color of old honey and blue eyes. Forget-me-nots that you'd not forget. Tall and straight. The kind that can stand flat-footed and kiss you. Viking.

McLee said: "I'm from headquarters—Lieutenant McLee. You're Miss Payne, I take it?"

"Yes. Won't you be seated?"

Just like that. Cool, as if she'd asked us for tea. All but her eyes as though she had just turned from some bottomless pit that had made her dizzy.

McLee looked at the swivel chairs lined up at the table.

"Where is he?" he asked.

"In here," she replied, looking back over her shoulder. "If you'll wait a moment—"

McLee craned his neck over her shoulder.

"What you been doing to him?" he demanded.

"I—I tried to make him as comfortable as I could," she faltered.

"Comfortable!" McLee's face was stony. "Don't you know enough not to touch a dead man until we get here?"

"He was my father," the girl replied simply.

McLee looked at her hard as we crossed the threshold. Captain Payne was lying on his bunk near the open porthole, dressed in a clean white shirt. His large capable hands were crossed upon the snow-white counter-pane, and his grizzled head rested upon a pillow slip embroidered in Hardanger. McLee looked about the small seven-by-nine cabin. It was finished in teak wood.

"And you wiped this wood work when you cleaned up?" he said.

"Yes—of course."

"Didn't think about fingerprints—or anything?"

She dropped her eyes. "I'm sorry. I had to get father ready for the minister. We're Lutherans."

McLee made a noise in his throat. He took a step toward the bunk and stood looking down at the dead man. Except for the pallor of the face, Captain Payne might have been asleep. There was not the slightest suggestion that violence had entered here and done murder.

"The report says that he was stabbed to death. How? Where?"

THE girl moved forward almost without a sound. When she turned the cover back, her face was whiter than the pillow slip. A ray of the morning sun, falling through the

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porthole touched her hair. I thought of Leif Ericson and his crowd.

McLee leaned over and examined the wound. He raised his eyes and looked at the open porthole, then he turned the cover back and said: "Let's go into the other room."

The girl followed us.

"Tell me what you know," said McLee.

"I know—almost nothing," she replied. "I called him for breakfast. When he didn't answer, Mr. Gunnar, the first mate, broke the lock."

"The door was locked on the inside?"

"Yes. I don't understand it. Father rarely locked the door when he was in his cabin."

"Maybe he was expecting it," said McLee. He consulted his notes. "Gunnar was the name of the man who called up and reported?"

"Yes. He should be back at any moment. I thought it was he when I heard you."

"Was the key in the lock?"

"I think so. I'm sure it was. It's there, now."

"Was anything missing?"

The girl shook her head. "My father never kept more than a few dollars in the cash box—not enough for anyone to commit murder for."

"Lady," said McLee, "they'll cut your throat down here for a dime. You didn't hear any sound during the night?"

"Nothing. That's why I think it must have happened while I was ashore. That's my cabin next to his. I'd have heard—"

"Not if he was stabbed through the heart. The medical examiner will tell us. He'll be along presently. What time did you return from shore last night?"

"About one-thirty. There was no light in his porthole, so I came in softly, not to awaken him."

McLee was looking at two doors in the opposite wall, marked respectively: "First" and "Second Officer."

"Gunnar, the man who reported, is the first officer, you said? Where is this second officer?"

The girl dropped her eyes.

"He is not with us any longer. He was discharged."

"What for?"

"I don't know what you mean," the girl replied. "He was discharged—in the regular way."

"Discharging a seaman," I interpolated gently, "doesn't mean that he's fired, Mac. It's the nautical equivalent for having served one's time."

"Like being let out of jail," said McLee. "Sorry. What was his name?"

"Storm—David Storm."

"Where is he, now?"

"He signed on the Anna Loring as master."

McLee made a note of it.

"How about Gunnar, the first officer—or mate?"

The girl raised her head as footsteps sounded on deck above our heads. "That's he returning," she replied. "He will tell you what he knows."

First Officer Gunnar of the Endymion was a big man in the sense that a load of hay is big in proportion to the vehicle that carries it. His shoulders were wide and massive, his chest that of a Negro pugilist. His head was abnormally large. It appeared merely to grow from a point midway between the massive shoulders without any visible connection. As a result, the soft collar he wore, gave the effect of a flat bib. His face was striking, if one liked the bold, predatory type. It seemed to have been

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carved rather than molded of some metal harder than steel. His forehead was high and wide, corrugated by two parallel lines, not from age, since he was no more than in his forties, but from some natural configuration of the skull.

IN contrast to all this bulkiness, his legs were curiously short and thin—spindly, almost—and his hands and feet were small and feminine. When he stopped short at the foot of the companionway stairs and looked at us, the total effect of him was that of a perfect V.

The girl said: "These gentlemen are from the police, Mr. Gunnar."

The mate removed his visored cap and mopped his corrugated brow.

"You got here quick," he said. "I only left the telephone a few minutes ago and stopped in for a drink on my way back."

"We don't lose any time in cases like this," said McLee. "Sit down and tell us what you know."

Gunnar laid his cap on the table and slid to a seat.

"I wish I knew something. I came aboard around eleven o'clock and went straight to bed. There was a light in the skipper's porthole as I came along the wharf. It went off just as I walked up the gang plank. When I came below, he called out. He thought it was Thelma," he added with a look at the girl, "and asked me if I had run into her up-town. I said I hadn't, and then I heard him turn over in his bunk and go to sleep."

"Miss Payne thinks he was dead when she returned at one-thirty," McLee said.

"She's wrong," the mate rejoined flatly. "I'd have heard something. I heard Thelma come in at one-thirty just as I was dropping off to sleep. I'd been reading. It couldn't have been done before I went to sleep," he repeated positively.

"What were *you* doing up-town until one-thirty, Miss Payne?" McLee asked.

Mr. Gunnar, having the interest transferred from himself, leaned back in his chair and sat looking at his visored cap.

"I went to dinner with a friend at the Alcazar Roof."

"Man?"

"Yes."

"Who was it?"

"Mr. Storm, the second mate," the girl replied, looking away. "Captain Storm of the Anna Loring, now."

First Officer Gunnar moved his gold-braided cap a little to one side. "The Loring is leaving this afternoon on the five o'clock high tide," he offered. "For South America. Bananas."

McLee made a note of it. The girl said: "Just the same, it was a step up. He's going places."

Her eyes were on Gunnar, but she seemed to be looking through him—not at him.

"And you're figuring on going places with him?" McLee prompted.

The girl started. There was a flash of fear in her blue eyes, but when she spoke her voice was calm and steady.

"He had no chance here. Mr. Gunnar owns a fifth interest in the Endymion."

"With the skipper gone," said McLee, "Mr. Gunnar is next in line. That would have meant promotion for Storm to first officer—or am I wrong?"

"You are," said the girl. "Mr. Gunnar will not be master of the Endymion as long as I own four-fifths of her, and if he were, David would

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not serve as his second in command. He's through taking orders from Gunnar."

"You're Captain Payne's only heir, then?"

"Yes."

"That must be Doctor Shale and the boys from the fingerprint department," McLee said after a pause, as voices and footsteps sounded from the gangway.

Doctor Shale, the medical examiner, went to work at once. There was no nonsense about Shale. He was a small, efficient man with the air of a mathematician and a flock of tricks in his medical kit that had shot more than one careful alibi full of holes.

He was through in ten minutes and his verdict was laconic and to the point.

"The weapon was an ordinary sheath knife or dagger," he said. "Single-edged and very sharp. Punctured the ventricle, I'd say. Autopsy will tell. Death was practically instantaneous."

"How long ago, would you say, Doctor?" McLee asked.

"Ten or twelve hours. Not more than twelve."

McLee drew out his watch.

"That makes it around eleven P.M. or midnight, then. Looks like you may be right, Miss Payne."

DOCTOR SHALE regarded the girl owlishly. He glanced through the open door of the skipper's state room, where Sam, the fingerprint man and his assistant were going over the woodwork.

"Anything else, Lieutenant?" he asked, putting his things away.

"Just one," said McLee. "In your opinion, could it have been done from the open porthole?"

Shale pursed his lips.

"It could have, but if so, the murderer held the knife with the edge away from him. Unusual, but not impossible."

McLee said:

"I just wanted to check, Doctor. That's the way the wound looked to me. That'll be all, then, thanks."

He drew out his note book, tore a leaf from it, wrote something on the slip of paper and handed it to Shale. The medical examiner adjusted his glasses, squinted at the note, then stuck it in his pocket with a nod at McLee, and left.

Sam, the fingerprint man, came to the door. "Somebody cleaned the joint with an oil rag, Lieutenant. There are a flock of prints, all right, but they're all fresh and of the same person, as near as I can tell. Shall I photograph them?"

"Yes," said McLee, "get exposures of three or four of the best."

"Is it necessary?" the girl asked. "I'm sure you'll find they're all mine."

"Routine, Miss Payne. This fellow, Storm—how did Captain Payne feel about him—I mean as a son-in-law?"

The girl started. "He didn't know—I mean he didn't want me to marry—anyone," she replied hurriedly.

Gunnar looked up. He regarded her contemplatively for an instant, then dropped his eyes, but in that instant he had disrobed her with his eyes. I glanced at McLee. He was studying his notes with a concentration that smelled of red herring.

No one had spoken for several minutes when Sam's flashlight bulb went off. Gunnar, the mate, almost jumped out of his skin at the muffled report, then sank back in his seat. McLee glanced his way and said: "Sorry. I should have warned you."

A siren sounded in the distance. It came nearer, I looked out of the port-

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hole. A prowl car had drawn up at the gangway. All I could see was the lower part of it and the legs of the two uniformed officers that got out together with another in civilian clothes.

The three of them came downstairs. One of the officers saluted.

"Captain Storm of the Anna Loring," he said with a nod at the young civilian between them.

"That'll be all, O'Brien," said McLee. "You and Cassidy go back to your car—but stick around."

"Yes, sir."

The young man stood staring from the girl to Gunnar, then at us.

"What's wrong, Thelma?" he asked.

"I'll do the questioning," McLee snapped.

"It's father," the girl ejaculated. "He was killed last night, David. Stabbed to death—"

McLee's eyes narrowed at the girl.

"All right, Storm, what have you got to say for yourself?"

Storm took a deep breath. His handsome face had drained of its ruddy color at the girl's ejaculation.

"What d'you want me to say? If you think I'd do a thing like that, you're crazy!" His gray eyes traveled to Gunnar, the mate. "Some more of your dirty work, eh!"

"Mr. Gunnar," McLee interposed, "has not as much as mentioned your name. Where were you at eleven to midnight, last night? We know where you were at one-thirty or a little after."

"At the Alcazar Roof." His eyes were on the girl.

"HE'S a liar," said Gunnar. "They left the Alcazar at ten and went aboard the Anna Loring. She's berthed not more than half a dozen blocks from here."

A sudden flow of color had suffused the girl's face.

"Is that right, Miss Payne?" McLee asked.

"Yes," she replied faintly.

"Anybody see you leave the ship, Storm?" McLee asked the youth.

"No — unless Gunnar stuck around."

"Too bad," said McLee, "I want an alibi from eleven to twelve. The Doctor's examination showed that Captain Payne had been killed about that time."

The color had returned to the young man's face.

"Why pick on me?" he demanded.

McLee said to Gunnar:

"You heard Miss Payne come aboard around one-thirty. Do you know if Storm was with her?"

The mate smiled loftily. "I guessed he was."

"You wouldn't have to guess, Gunnar!" the young sailor snapped. "You'd been following us around town all evening. I'm wondering what you thought it was going to get you?"

"I'm conducting this examination!" McLee cut in. "Did you see Storm, Mr. Gunnar?"

"I saw a man on the wharf. If it wasn't Storm, it was his twin brother," the mate replied. "I wasn't going to say anything about it. Didn't want to get Thelma in bad."

The girl was regarding him as one contemplates an insect just stepped on, but she said nothing. McLee was looking through the open door of Captain Payne's cabin. There was a familiar expression on his face — or rather the familiar lack of expression. From close association with him over a period of years, I've learned that when his face assumes that blank stare, he has stumbled on something and is

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trying to reconcile it with appearances.

"Did Storm come aboard?" he asked the mate.

"He didn't have to," said Gunnar. "Thelma carried two suitcases up to the wharf to him."

"You're sure he didn't come aboard?" McLee insisted.

"Positive. He hung around on the wharf while Thelma packed the suitcases."

Storm smiled. Out of the corner of his mouth. If it hadn't been for McLee and the prowl car, Gunnar would have got laid flat for that remark, I saw.

"All right," he said. "I came back for my gear. You can check that with the cab driver. He helped me aboard the Loring with them. So, what?"

Gunnar said: "You never owned but one suitcase besides your sea chest."

The girl leaned across the table. Her earnest blue eyes were on McLee's impassive face.

"The suitcases were mine, Lieutenant," she said. "Captain Storm and I were married this afternoon at the city hall. I had decided to go with him on the Anna Loring."

McLee's face was stonier than ever.

"Then why did you stay until this morning?"

"Because—well, because I couldn't bear to leave my father without telling him of my marriage. He had been kind to me in his own way. I suppose I loved him—in spite of everything."

McLee turned to Gunnar. "Miss Payne states that the key was in the lock—on the inside when you broke the door down. Check?"

The mate nodded.

"The murderer killed him through the porthole. It's the only way it could have been done."

"What I'm wondering," Storm cut in, "why did the skipper lock his door last night—of all nights? He hadn't done it in months—not since that time in Port of Colombia when he lost his key and we had to pick the lock through the porthole with a chain hook."

"There was two hundred dollars in the cash box," Gunnar reminded him sourly.

"I took the two hundred dollars, Lieutenant," the girl said. "They were mine by right. My father held the Endymion in trust for me from my mother's estate. He had never given me an accounting. I took the money before I went ashore. I was not going to my husband empty-handed."

McLee looked at the three of them in silence for several moments, then he said to me: "What's a chain hook?"

"They're used," said I, "for handling the anchor chain on sailing ships when it's coiled up on deck, preparatory to dropping the anchor."

"Get me one, Mr. Gunnar, please," McLee said.

The mate hoisted himself to his feet by the arms of the chair. "Sure," he said hurriedly.

HE returned with an iron rod about four feet long. At one end was a loop for a handle, at the other, a hook. McLee took it in his hand, examined it, then laid it on the table.

"You were going to South America with your husband?" he said to the girl.

She nodded and Storm supplied: "I'm scheduled to pull out at five this evening. This is going to cost me my berth."

"Sorry," said McLee, "murder doesn't wait on—tides."

The young man flushed angrily.

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"Why don't you arrest me and have it over with?"

"David!" the girl cried.

"Maybe I will," said McLee. He turned to the mate. "Mr. Gunnar, you were the only one aboard except Miss Payne?"

"That's right. All of the crew was paid off together with Storm—excuse me, Captain Storm."

"And you're positive that he remained on the wharf? That he did not come aboard to help Miss Payne with the suitcases?"

"I'll take my oath on it," Gunnar replied. "He waited there on the wharf all of half an hour, not ten feet away from the skipper's porthole."

"But you didn't actually see him go near it?"

"N-no. He walked up and down, though. He was out of my sight part of the time."

Storm flung out:

"I never moved from the midships bollard! You're a liar by the clock."

"That'll do, Storm," McLee cut in. "How long have you sailed with Captain Payne, Mr. Gunnar?"

"A little over twenty years. Since Thelma was a baby. And I've tried to do the right thing by him. Ask any one who knows."

"You hoped some day to be captain of the Endymion?"

"Well—naturally. I wasn't getting any younger."

"Everything was all set when Storm showed up and upset your plans by falling in love with Miss Payne?" McLee asked sympathetically.

Gunnar eyed him suspiciously.

"What d'you mean, upset? The skipper would never have given him command of the Endymion—not while he was living."

"I'm coming to that," said McLee.

"I don't have to use women to get me berths, copper!" Storm flung out, "nor commit murder—"

"Looks phony, don't it, Storm?" McLee agreed amiably. "You wouldn't have needed to kill Captain Payne. In time you'd have got command of the Endymion if you had wanted it, since Miss Payne inherited the ship from her mother."

The young man recoiled as if from a blow. "Then what the hell are you driving at?" he stormed.

"The whole thing looks phony," said McLee. "As phony as when the murderer tried to make it look like an outside job, when everything points to the inside."

"I don't get you," said Gunnar.

"In the first place," McLee went on, "the blow was *not* delivered through the open porthole as the murderer intended us to believe, unless he held the knife with the edge away from him as Doctor Shale pointed out. Then, again, the wound is at an angle of about thirty degrees *away* from the porthole. It *could* have been made from there, but the chances are about ten thousand to one against it."

"How else could it have been done—with the door locked on the inside and the key sticking in the lock?" Gunnar demanded.

"THAT'S one of those things we're up against every so often," McLee said. He picked up the four-foot chain hook and held it at arms' length, like a fencer stabbing at an adversary. "I'm wondering why you didn't reach through the porthole and turn the key from the inside with this instead of breaking the door down, Gunnar? You had picked the lock for Captain Payne, once that way—in Port Colombia."

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"I—I didn't think of it," the mate stammered. His hard jaw had suddenly gone slack. He was looking past McLee through the open door of the skipper's cabin. "Besides, it was low tide and the porthole was three or four feet below the level of the wharf."

"Same as it is now," McLee supplied. "That's why I wonder how you figure Storm did it—how any one could have done it—from the porthole anywhere near the time the doctor said it was done. The murderer would have to be a contortionist." He looked at me. "I'm sort of hazy on nautical stuff, but if the Anna Loring is going out on the high tide at five o'clock this afternoon, then it's about full low tide, now, and it was high tide at four this morning. Am I right?"

I nodded.

"And if the murderer did the job through the porthole," he resumed, "he must have done it around that time, which he couldn't have since Doctor Shale said that Captain Payne had been dead at least ten hours—perhaps twelve. So that's out."

The mate's face was working. "I don't get you," he said again.

"What I'm driving at," McLee went on, "is that it is between you three, Gunnar. You, Storm and the girl. One of you went into the cabin and did it, then when the tide was high this morning early, went up on the wharf, reached through the porthole with this chain hook and turned the key in the lock to make it look like it had been locked all the time. Storm is out, since he was the one to call attention to the chain hook. Only a fool would stick his head in the noose that way, and Storm's no fool. Besides you were positive that he did not come aboard when he brought Miss Payne and you, yourself testified to the effect that both of them went aboard the Anna Loring a little after ten o'clock."

"What was to prevent him from having come later—when the tide was high?" Gunnar demanded heavily, sullenly.

"The Doctor's verdict. Shale doesn't make that kind of mistakes." He paused and looked at the girl. "Miss Payne is out, too—not because she was the skipper's daughter, but because she'd not have stayed aboard all night with the man she had murdered. That leaves you, Gunnar, unless I'm wrong."

"You're wrong as hell!" the mate shouted.

McLee shook his head. "Captain Payne sent you up-town to follow Storm and his daughter when he discovered that the two hundred dollars were missing from the cash box. The whole thing was made to order for you, Gunnar. The Anna Loring was due to leave on this afternoon's tide. You knew we'd get Storm by wireless. With him under arrest for murder, and she as an accessory after the fact, your decks were—ahem—cleared for you. She'd have to hock the Endymion to get money for the defense. Unless I'm mistaken, you'd have gone to the bat for her—for a consideration—a larger share of the Endymion and the command of her."

He paused. "You were very clever, Gunnar. You knew that they had been married and that the girl was sneaking off with her duds and wouldn't try her father's door. It was a grand idea killing the skipper and locking the door afterwards by reaching through the porthole with this dingus," he added balancing the chain hook in his hand, "only you slipped up on tide versus time. The two don't mix. Better come clean."

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THE mate made a lightning movement. McLee ducked. Storm was even quicker than Gunnar. There was a flash and a report that seemed to fill the small mess room to bursting. The bullet singed McLee's forehead and ploughed into the teak wood panel behind him, and the gun went clattering across the floor. The next minute Gunnar was down with Storm on top of him. McLee reached around the end of the table and slipped handcuffs on the cursing mate.

Then he walked to the porthole and sang out to the men in the prowl car:

"All right, O'Brien, come down and get him."

When they had taken Gunnar away, McLee grinned at Storm and the girl.

"Sorry I had to step on you two so hard," he said, "but I had to make him think I suspected you—and thanks for the buggy-ride, son. That slug would have ruined my complexion."

"I'll be getting back to my ship," said Storm.

McLee was looking at the girl. I could have sworn he winked at her. "I'm holding you both as material witnesses," he said. "Sorry, Captain Storm. Routine."

The girl said: "I thought all policemen were—hard guys, Lieutenant."

"That's what I thought about sailors," he retorted. "Looks like we were both wrong. I'll see that you're released—after the Anna Loring goes out. Safety first. Then, again, you'll be needing a skipper for the Endymion. Let's travel."

## "There Was Life in Him"

DANIEL O'CONNELL, most famous of Irish lawyers, had a phenomenal gift for divining what was going on inside the mind of a hostile witness. He showed it brilliantly when engaged in contesting a will which he believed had been signed by taking the dead man's hand and tracing the mark which served for a signature, so that in case the will was contested, the witnesses could swear that they had seen the man with the pen in his hand signing the will.

The most important of those witnesses was taken on by O'Connell for cross examination. "Tell me," began the lawyer, "was the testator alive when he signed the will?"

"There was life in him," replied the witness. And no matter how often O'Connell asked the question, that was the only answer he could get.

The baffled lawyer paused thoughtfully. The success of his cause depended upon his ability to break down this stubborn, dogged, unimpressionable witness. He returned to the attack. "There was life in him—that's all you have to say?" he asked quietly. The witness nodded. Suddenly O'Connell leaned forward, pointed a threatening finger.

"Tell me," he thundered, "was it not a live fly that was placed in the dead man's mouth in order that you might swear there was life in him when the will was signed?"

At this miraculous divination of the truth, the rogue collapsed in the witness chair. And with him collapsed the case of the will forgers.

—*John L. Considine.*

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# Chinese Tongs

By Da Shan

The hatchet-men of the tongs are always sly

DFW FACT SPECIAL ARTICLE

MANY people will be surprised to learn that tongs are unknown in China. A tong, like chop suey, is purely an American institution. A few years ago *GOW YUE*, an aggressive tong on the Pacific Coast, decided to branch out. An organizer was sent to Hong Kong with the seal, banner, and symbolic working tools of the order. He remained in Hong Kong exactly three days, which happened to be the interval between the arrival of his ship and the next vessel leaving for San Francisco.

***Tongs Are Unknown in China —Yet They Flourish in America for Reasons Best Known to Chinamen. Here Is the Truth About These Societies of Secret Murder and Their Ruthless Warfare***

A tong, believe it or not, is a benevolent, protective club, with a President,



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Vice-president, Stewards, Deacons, Sentinels, Color Guards. It has passwords, countersigns, oaths, signs, and symbols, just like a college fraternity, or many of the lodges and societies that appeal to American men. Like its American counterparts, it pays sick and death dues, takes care of widows and orphans, and cares for the aged and disabled. Unemployment insurance is an old story to the tongs. They have always found food, clothing, and shelter for "Sons of the Middle Kingdom" who have been temporarily out of favor with the God of Wealth.

There is one important difference between Chinese Tongs and American secret societies. When an American joins a lodge he takes solemn oaths to conceal the secrets of the order, to render aid to his brothers in distress, and to regard their women and children as he would like to have them regard his own.

He is warned not to take these obligations lightly, since he will suffer grievous injury if he betrays the hidden work of the order, or fails to answer a summons for assistance given by those in good standing, in the hour of their need. These promises are given and accepted, presumably in good faith, but who ever heard of an American secret society putting into execution the penalties for violations of sacred oaths?

With the Chinese, the opposite holds true. If a newly initiated brother is told that he will lose his left hand if caught cheating a fellow member, the tong master means exactly what he says, and there is no surprise or complaint if Wong, or Moy, or Chin reports for work one morning with his left hand missing. Fortunately, all Chinese know this condition and seldom betray their promises.

Even the death penalty is adjudged by a Council of the Elders in extreme cases. A death reported to the police as suicide is probably what it appears to be, but what the police never learn is that the dead man's act was by a request—from his tong brothers. He must either commit suicide or be prepared to receive a delegation of his countrymen who are able to assist him in his duties.

The first Chinese to arrive in America were two men and a woman who landed in San Francisco in 1848. By 1850, the U. S. Census Bureau reported the presence of 758 Chinese. The first Chinese men went to the mines, but the next batch found that the gamblers in the mining camps were sending their shirts to China by sailing ships at enormous prices, so they organized laundries.

The Chinese ability to make a few scraps of meat and ten cents' worth of vegetables taste like a Delmonico banquet led them naturally into the restaurant business, but as their numbers increased on the Pacific Coast, the attitude of the local residents became more hostile and their standing in courts of law less certain.

LACKING confidence in American justice, and being fond of their own customs and manners, the Chinese soon formed societies for mutual protection. These first clubs composed all who had the same family name. Since over ninety-five per cent of all Chinese are from Kwang Tung Province, known to Americans as "Canton," it was easy to find many to join the family guilds. Waxing rich from the monopolies they enjoyed in gambling and kindred tribute-paying activities, the family guilds began to persecute those outside the pale, and

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to war against one another for the larger share of the income.

The Chinese, paradoxical as it may seem, love peace, and will go to great lengths to compromise and avoid bloodshed. But if "face" is lost—that is, if personal pride and prestige is challenged—they will fight to the bitter end to avenge their offended honor and secure what they believe to be their just reward. So it was with the minorities outside of the Big Family Guilds. Failing to obtain their share of the gambling profits, and having been discriminated against in court by interpreters working for the Big Family Guilds, their only recourse was to violence.

Let us see how these tongs worked. The rich merchants did not take part personally in the fights. They hired strong, young men, called "Horses" in the slang of the tongs. These horses, or warriors, were put under the command of a fighting leader and billeted in a building at some distance from the headquarters of the tong they represented.

The leader was supplied with money, weapons, and a list of his intended victims, with a price opposite the name of each. Thus, the reward for killing an inactive tong member was only three hundred dollars, with one thousand dollars for an interpreter, and five to ten thousand dollars for a Tong Master. In Tong slang, a victim was "pie"; if the hatchet-man, or "boo-how-doy,"-killed two men he was said to have eaten "two pie." Victims were "big pie" or "little pie" according to the amount of the reward for their death.

A tong leader was "mince pie." This term probably originated with the discovery that hatchet-men who ate pie and coffee before starting on their rounds accomplished more than those who dined on noodles and tea with a few bowls of rice.

MANY Americans have the mistaken belief that tongs are active in murdering white people, but this is not true. When a tong war starts, red announcements are displayed on bulletin boards, written in Chinese, warning the community of the opening of hostilities. Shop fronts are boarded up and everyone leaves the streets. The police recognize these signs and warn away any foolish sightseers, but unfortunately a few people have been shot accidentally, as a penalty for their curiosity.

Americans who have been deliberately murdered by hatchet-men, in practically every case, have been involved in some Chinese "racket" and killed as punishment for double-crossing their Chinese associates, or for working in the ranks of a rival organization. The smuggling of Chinese into America, the sale and transportation of narcotics, and interference in gambling have been the usual causes of such killings. Obviously, there have been a number of American policemen and detectives killed in the execution of their duties, but the ordinary citizen is perfectly safe in "Chinatown" as long as he minds his own business.

Another erroneous supposition is that Chinese mistreat women. This is false because they love to gamble and have a superstitious belief that abusing women, who are poetically called "lotus blossoms," will bring bad luck at the fan-tan tables. White wives of Chinese, of course, often complain about the food they are served, but any woman marrying a man of another race should expect to be treated no better than women of his own country.

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T-bone steaks and champagne are not Chinese dinner fare.

## II

WITH the old ideas about tongs swept to one side, we can now attend a tong meeting and see what actually takes place. The gathering is held on the top floor of a building owned by the tong, with sentinels posted at doors and windows to keep out enemies.

At the back of the room is an altar, with a statue or painting of Kwang-Ti, the God of War, and patron saint of the tongs. Before the god is an incense burner, flanked on either side by candlesticks, and flower vases, thus making the "sacrificial five," dear to the hearts of religious Chinese.

The Master of the Tong enters first. He lights the two red candles and then ignites three sticks of punk. Holding these between his folded hands, he kneels on the floor and bows three times to the God of War, waving the burning incense sticks up and down as he bows. He then places the sticks in the incense burner and takes his seat on a great, carved red and gold chair, facing the lodge room.

The other officers of the tong, corresponding to Vice-president, Treasurer, Secretary, and Interpreter, enter, and are seated on the right and left of the Master, the seniors being on his left and the juniors on his right. Next come the "Elder Group," or "Wise Old Men," who have served long and honorably in the tong. They take seats near the officers, and the meeting is now called to order. Committees from the Elder Group make their reports, and a vote is taken, whether pending questions can be settled peacefully, or by war. If war is voted, a white banner is unfurled to represent death, and the Chief-Gunman is summoned.

As we have already seen, the officers go into seclusion on a declaration of war, for there is always a price on each of their heads. This official group is called the "civil function" among the Chinese, while the gunmen are known as the "armed function." With the "boo-how-doy" goes the Interpreter, but he is careful to keep out of sight since he has a double danger. The opposing tong puts a premium on his head, but if luck goes against his tong brothers they may suspect him of treachery and cut his life cord without the formality of referring his case to the civil function.

Only the Chief-Gunman visits the official group. Receiving his orders from them, he holds a similar meeting of his own in the hatchet-men's barracks. Each "horse" is asked if he is afraid to kill, and if he will obey orders implicitly. If he answers in the negative, he is kept in sight until the war is over and then released, but if he answers in the affirmative, he is given a series of oaths, with penalties attached to each.

To insure respect, a hair is taken from each "horse," he is required to gaze into a mirror that is kept in a safe when not in use, and he is measured from head to foot with a ruler. These constitute "getting the measure of a man," and correspond to the black magic practices of the Middle Ages in Europe. If further safeguards are needed, a doctor takes a thimbleful of blood from each hatchetman's arm. The blood of all is mixed with hot rice wine in a sacrificial bowl, and then toasts of fidelity are drunk from the bowl by all present. This is known as the "Blood Brother Ceremony" and is rarely used.

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Each killer is given five silver dollars wrapped in red paper, with the Chinese character for "Long Life" marked on each wrapper. The offer of this money is the hatchetman's second chance to withdraw from the coming job, if he has lost his courage. Refusing to take the money, he joins the others who may have dropped out.

In addition to the usual respect paid to the God of War, the gun-chief may cross a pair of pistols on the floor and order each of his men to step over them. This is the third and last test. The gunmen are now given "get-away-money" which is kept in reserve for that purpose only, and must be displayed frequently for inspection.

AT the hatchet-men's barracks, liquor, gambling, and women are taboo, for out of these may arise quarrels that would disrupt the harmony of the executioners. To kill time, quantities of hot tea and dried pumpkin seeds are consumed between the meals, which are rich in variety and taste.

Shark-fin soup, sweet and sour pork, roast pheasant with water-chestnuts, Peking duck, mushroom-filets, licheenuts, and almond candy are the principal dishes, with rice and tea taken for granted by these pampered sons of Old Cathay.

When the actual battle cry is sounded, gongs and drums are pounded if a mass attack is launched, but usually the killers draw slips with the names of their victims written in the secret code of the tong, and leave the building quietly. Originally, a hatchet was hidden inside the wide-sleeved Chinese gowns, but today the gunmen are proud of their Broadway clothes and automatic pistols. With the passing of the old costumes and the old weapons, has gone the old chivalry that required the killer to call to his victim to face about and receive a clip in the head, followed by the dropping of the weapon at the scene of the killing. Today, no warning is given, but the dapper-dressed "horse" shoots his quarry in the back, and then gives the gun to an accomplice for disposal.

To keep down tong wars that were ruinous in lives and money to all concerned, the Chinese merchants organized a "Peace Society" in the West, and the "Chinese Consolidated Benevolent Society" in the East. These "holding companies" collect two dollars per year in dues from each Chinese and arbitrate differences among the tongs. Behind them is the enormous power of the Chinese Consuls and the Chinese Ambassador to the United States. Even though most of the tong brothers are now American citizens, the Chinese officials in America feel that tong wars give Americans an unfair picture of the real Chinese, and hurt relations between the two republics.

These two great Peace Societies have been successful in reducing warfare, and at the same time have looked after the welfare of the 100,000 Chinese who live within our borders, many of whom suffered acutely from the last business depression.

The old style tong is a dying institution, because the conditions which called it into being are themselves disappearing. American born Chinese are citizens of the United States. They work hard, save their money, and send their children to colleges where they become doctors, lawyers, engineers, authors, painters, sculptors, and business men. With increased education, they are able to present their own cases in our courts without interpreters, and

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they have acquired a new confidence in the justice of our laws and customs.

In the pioneer days, there were few Chinese women. To-day there are no more sing-song houses, and no more quarrels over the graceful little ladies with their almond eyes and jet black hair. Bridge and poker have supplanted mah jong and fan-tan. Where there were a dozen Chinese theaters in America in 1900, there is only one to-day. Rice-wine of good quality is harder to find and more expensive than gin and whiskey. If you see Mr. Wang hurrying down Market Street in San Francisco, or Mott Street in New York, he is probably on his way to the latest movie, wearing the latest style clothes, and accompanied by Mrs. Wang who is wearing a good copy of a Paris creation.

There are twelve tongs on the Pacific Coast, two of which, the Hip Sing and the On Leong, dominate the scene. In fact, Hip Sing and On Leong are the only tongs in the East. On Leong has the most members. Hip Sing has the most chapters. Their last war was in 1924. To-day all is serene. Let us join them in wishing that the Heavenly Emperor may be pleased by the peace between these two great orders, and accept the offerings of gratitude presented daily at his shrine.

## The Incriminating Shampoo

ONE can never tire of reciting the adventures of Dr. Locard. The more one reads of his exploits the greater the conviction grows that he is the greatest detective of all times. His ingenuity is boundless.

There is the story of the bombing case which occurred in southern France. An abortive attempt had been made to bomb a government building in Marseilles. Fortunately, the bomb did not explode. It was picked up by the police and sent to Dr. Locard for analysis.

Dr. Locard found that cellulose had gone into the making of the bomb. He knew that this chemical was rare and that if he could detect traces of it on the person of a suspect, he would have his man.

The crime expert did not have long to wait. All the local Communist bomb throwers were rounded up for a session with Dr. Locard. Among other things, he knew that the hair is the greatest trap for dust known.

Fortunately, also, Communists seem to have a great deal of affection for hirsute adornment. This also simplified matters considerably.

Dr. Locard took a gallon of pure alcohol and gave each suspect a thorough scalp treatment. The liquid was drained off into a clean bottle and labeled with the suspect's name.

Time did the rest. The suspects sat around Dr. Locard's laboratory waiting for the alcohol to evaporate. In the sediment found at the bottom of the hair washing of Monsieur Vernet was found a thick deposit of cellulose nitrate. Vernet was the man. It required a bit of reasoning with him to show him that it was impossible for him to have gotten cellulose nitrate into his hair, because he was not a chemist, nor was he employed in an ammunitions factory. There was nothing else for him to do but confess.

—*Edward Podolsky.*

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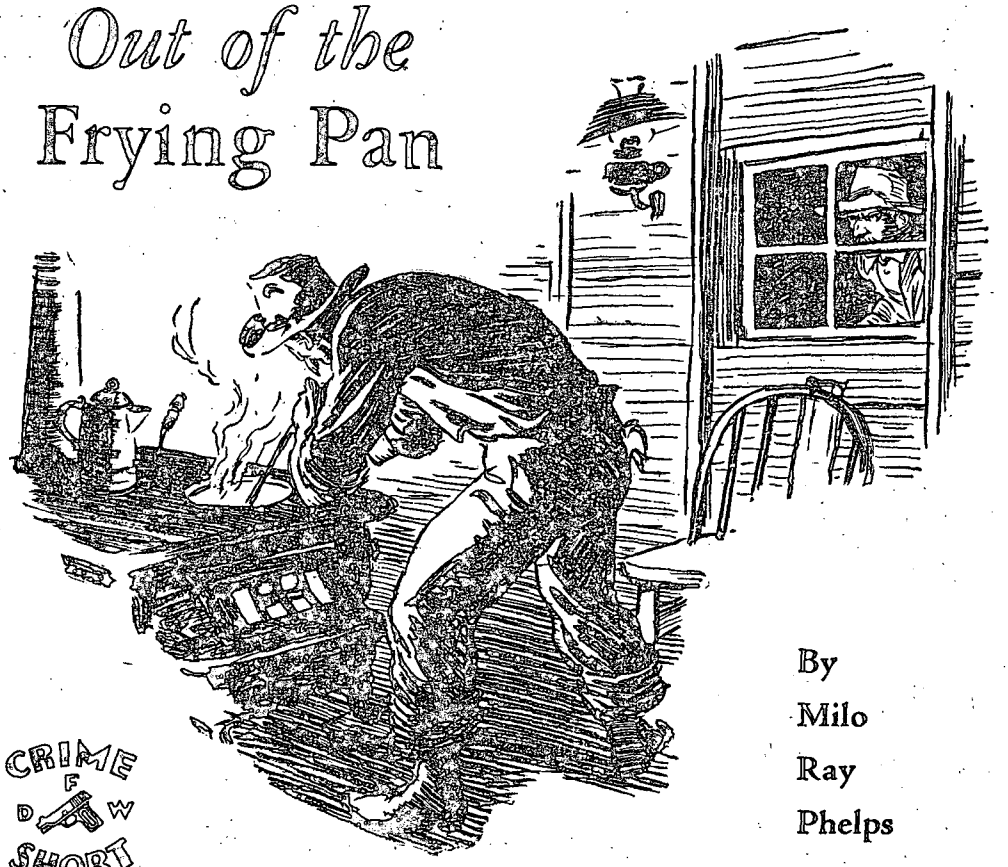
# Out of the Frying Pan



CRIME DOES NOT SHORT

Charlie watched intently—waiting

By Milo Ray Phelps

*For Years Dr. Karl Garnet Planned a Perfect Murder and Getaway—Straight to a Hillside Tomb of His Own Making*

DURING his first year on the mountain, Charlie Martin had puzzled somewhat over the manner of his being there. Never as to why his money came in cash instead of checks, or why his reports went to a Post Office box instead of the hotel. Never as to why the property was in his name, or why he was forbidden to mention the existence of the owner.

It did not even trouble him that he was ignorant of the man's name. He simply dubbed him the "Skipper," and let it go at that. All that puzzled him was why the man had selected him of all persons, a seafaring man, to mine this property for him. That, and the hole.

"Go there," the man had directed, "buy the place, and dig a hole in the hillside."

Charlie had gone. But he had found a hundred and forty acres of hillside! Where should he put this hole? How big should he make



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it? Should he dig it straight down or straight in? But apparently there was gold anywhere in these hills, for the Skipper proved not in the least particular. He just wanted a hole.

So Charlie had decided on a straight-in hole, near the cabin, just to keep everything shipshape. But how was a man to dig a hole into ground as hard as ore ballast? He made discreet inquiries in the town and the neighboring mines and reported that he needed powder, drills, sledges—all manner of tools and equipment to dig this hole. Sufficient money accompanied his next pay envelope, and the hole started slowly into the rock bound hillside.

For many months, however, the old fellow remained anxious about it. Was it big enough? Was it bearing in the right direction? Was there gold in these carloads of rock that he was spilling out down the slope?

But apparently none of these things mattered. The Skipper wrote that some day they would make an assay; in the meantime just keep on digging, go to town regularly, mind his tongue, and keep his reports complete.

That was three years ago, and Charlie had long since stopped worrying about the hole. It was eight hundred feet long now, and he was proud of it. Straight as a guy she was, with just enough dip to stern to roll the ore car, and solid rock all the way. That is, all but the bow tip. He'd run into softer stuff these last few days—white, like rock salt. Bull quartz, as near as he could make out from his mining book, and if there was much more of it he'd have to start timbering.

Only the reports now marred his perfect equanimity. It was irksome having to log every item, every person, event, and conversation of his daily life. But where else could you earn a hundred dollars a month for as little trouble? Nowhere that he knew of.

Charlie was seated at the table in his one room shake cabin, just finishing up his breakfast. A man in his sixties, slight but sturdy of build, with a generous crop of gray hair and a straggly mustache. His lean face, reddened by years of exposure, was intelligent enough of feature, but years of patient routine had robbed it of all animation; left it vacant, almost doltish. Life had been a matter of ship's orders to Charlie Martin, a rather solemn and silent business.

He gulped down the last of his coffee, drew a tablet and pencil from the table drawer, and bent frowningly over his unfinished report. Tomorrow he went to town, and he'd better complete this thing right now and have it done with. Awkwardly gripping the pencil he scrawled:

"Luke Patterson got himself two new hogs—sow and a boar. Blooded Berkshires. Cost $1,000. Limpy Foss got himself drunk again on Bartini's wine, and started a brush fire. Burned thirty acres, and would have took Bartini's house if the wind hadn't changed. It almost went hard with Limpy. Like I told you, the folks here are a suspicious lot not friendly to strangers, and Limpy's only been here nine years. There was talk of stringing him to a yard arm, but Meggs rushed him out of the county.

"The Ruby is working again. The Lucky Star has put in a six-stamp mill, and there's talk of a cyanide plant. The Black Beauty is still running $300 to the ton, 900 fine. I tell you Mister, there is lots of gold up here, and I hope I can strike some for you. I think there's maybe some gold on our dump right now, but I can't be sure. The

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hole is 812½ ft. by my last sounding, and the rock is getting pretty. I wish you would make that assay. Thanks for the boots. They fit like a canvas patch. Also the gloves."

He stopped, pawed his chin reflectively, and then wound up: "Dutyfully yours, Charles Martin."

He consulted his big silver watch. Seven bells. He'd better get going. He dumped his tin dishes in a basin, poured cold water over them, and stepped out into the bright morning sunlight. Yep, it was a lucky day when he had bumped into the Skipper on that street corner. Eighty dollars a month he was salting away, and he'd soon have that stake he'd always dreamed about. He wouldn't mind boring this hole clean to Nevada.

DR. KARL GARNET was known as something of a character in San Francisco. He was not out of line professionally. He drove a good car, maintained expensive offices, and enjoyed a select clientele. But his private life was a subject of much comment among his colleagues.

To begin with, the dumpy old house he occupied in the Mission was hardly a dwelling for one of the city's leading diagnosticians, and a man of means. Then there was his personal appearance—his shaggy gray mane and untrimmed mustache—his sullen, taciturn manner—his dark frumpy clothing, like a horse-doctor of the nineties.

All had become bywords through the years. Lloyd George, they called him, Sour Puss, and Old Snake Eye. Rumor had it that some tragedy in his youth had soured the man, but if any knew the facts they failed to air them, and the majority simply found him queer and let it go at that.

The doctor's oddities had taken various forms. First, merely that he never showed himself except during his professional day. After hours he sought the seclusion of his musty house, and for years there had been speculations that he was working on some secret scientific experiment.

Then had come the nocturnal walks—those months during which he might be seen night after night prowling the waterfront, lower Mission and Howard Streets, hanging about cheap hotels, saloons and breadlines, intently studying the faces of the men who gathered there. They said then that he was writing a book.

The walks had ended abruptly, and there had followed weekend trips away from the city in his car. No one had ever trailed him, or chanced to run into him on the road. All anybody knew was that he drove off early in the morning and sometimes did not return till late at night. Those who delighted in giving the doctor a sinister air insisted that he was burying his money in the hills.

Lately this flare had been supplemented by two others that had stumped even the most resourceful speculators. The first of these was gardening. Hatless and shirtless he worked daily in his back yard, reddening his face, and roughening his hands to an extent critical for one in his profession. Second, he had joined a gun club, and appeared regularly twice a week on the pistol range.

Oh, old Doc Garnet was a character, no doubt about it. And could he have been observed at that moment, another quirk might have been added to his oddities—that of talking to himself.

He sat in the cluttered study of his old dwelling. On the desk before him lay a metal cash box. Beside it a stack of folded tablet sheets weighted down

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with a .38 calibre automatic. He was engaged in lifting the sheets one at a time from the cash box, reading them through, and then sliding them under the sinister paper weight. After transferring each sheet, and before reaching for the next, he would cock his head sideways, squint his right eye, and recite portions of what he had just read to the walls in what was not quite his natural voice.

There were over a hundred and fifty folded sheaves of paper, and the doctor had been pursuing this strange occupation since early morning. He emitted a grunt of satisfaction when the last had been transferred, put the automatic in the cash box, and placed this in a lower drawer. He picked up the stack of papers. With a noticeable roll to his walk, he moved into the adjoining room. Here, at a small grate, he stood for some minutes burning the papers and carefully breaking up the ashes with an iron poker.

The old-fashioned clock on the mantle chimed eight. The doctor glanced up with a start, awakened from a reverie that had traced half a smile about his habitually hard-set mouth. He set down the poker and hastily left the room.

AT that precise moment Charlie Martin, engaged in mucking out the rock loosened by his previous day's charges, paused with a shovel full in mid air.

"Fair winds and sweet water!"

Dropping the rock into the car he bent over it, excitedly examining the fragments in the hissing flare of the lamp attached to his miner's cap. Pink quartz, pitted all over with cob-webby rust holes. With trembling fingers he lifted a piece. Nugget gold, as sure as he was an able seaman! With an ecstatic curse he bent his frame against the rear of the dump car and started it rumbling down the track for the tunnel mouth.

In the blinding light of the ore dump he took another look; then hurried to the cabin for a final check. After all, he was a sailor, not a miner, and fool's gold had sent better men than he off their tack.

But when several of the loosened nuggets lay clean and golden in their sulphuric bath, all foreign elements having bubbled away beneath the consuming bite of the acid, Charlie's elation knew no bounds. Diving for the sea chest beneath his wall bunk he emerged with a squat bottle of Jamaica rum, and joyfully up-ended it to the count of ten.

"Son of a two-tailed tarpon!" He set the bottle down with a bang. "Sailin' blind in a fog, and with the rudder jammed, I made port! Port o' Gold! The Skipper should know about this."

He groped for the pencil, bent over the tablet, and executed a shaky "P. S." Then he paused and reached for the rum bottle, for a seaman who has just made port must have his grog. During the next ten minutes his hand kept straying to the bottle and this was finished before his postscript was begun. Whereupon he cocked his head sideways, squinted his right eye, and surveyed the paper with spirited contempt.

Hell afire! This was no time for log entries and ship's papers. This called for a personal report on the bridge. True, his orders were emphatic never to contact the Skipper in person, but this was an emergency. He'd struck gold! The man should know about it at once.

He sprang to his feet. Lingering only to roll the ore car back into the

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tunnel and secure his wad from the sea chest he climbed into his battered flivver and went back-firing down the mountain.

Charlie's knowledge of San Francisco, like that of all the cities of his acquaintance, fanned out from the waterfront. Leaving the Vallejo boat, he instinctively headed along the Embarcadero to get his bearings.

It was now mid-afternoon, and the effects of his rum had worn thin. He was still at fever heat concerning the news he carried, but the teeming bustle of the city against his three years of solitude rattled and unnerved him. He missed the buoyant enthusiasm with which he had started his journey. What he needed, he decided, was more rum, and quickly piloted himself to the nearest saloon.

A couple of stiff shots amply justified his decision. Once again he was equal to the occasion, and would hunt up the Skipper at once and tell him the news. He turned, started for the door. Then ran square into the arms of a towering blond Swede.

With a shout "Half-steam" Olson flung mighty arms about him, towed him back to the bar. Charlie protested, but not to the point of refusal. He'd stood many a watch for "Half-steam" poking around among those islands where he was going to retire when this mining deal petered out. He hadn't seen "Half-steam" since he left the Hulda in Tahiti five years ago. Olson was full of wind from the islands. He'd have to have a little sea chat and a few drinks with him.

But Charlie remembered his orders. Not a word did he spill of his mission or of where he had been keeping himself, and he steadfastly refused a berth with "Half-steam," though the latter offered him sixty-five and a bunk aft.

They had dinner together. Then they drank a few parting rounds to old times, and it was well after dark when Charlie, leaning heavily on his memory of turns and crossings, veered into a hotel on Third Street and asked to see the man in six hundred.

"There's no man in six hundred," said the clerk. "What's his name?"

Charlie blinked that he didn't know—a man about his size, with the same kind of mustache.

"Are you sure it was this hotel? What was the name of it?"

Charlie shook his head. He didn't know that either. Maybe he'd made a mistake. Maybe it was another hotel. He found his way to the sidewalk and stood gazing uncertainly up and down the block.

## II

AT two minutes past eight o'clock Dr. Karl Garnet's sleek black coupé drew to the curb in front of the home of Dr. Franklyn Rice. Leaving the motor running and the car door open (two points that attracted the attention of the passing newspaper reporter), the doctor hastily mounted the porch and rang the bell. Admitted by the butler, who knew him, he asked to see Rice and his wife, and stepped composedly into the drawing room to wait.

Dr. Rice and his wife entered the room side by side. Garnet advanced with a smile of greeting and warmly shook hands. Then, without a flash of warning, he drew an automatic from his coat pocket and began firing. Each of the first bullets was fatal; both victims slumping to the floor without a cry. But Garnet calmly stood there, like a man gone mad, and emptied the remaining six cartridges into the crumpled bodies.

Brandishing the empty gun at the

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terrified butler, he hurried out through the hall and down the stairs. The near smile that had struggled with his features that morning broke grimly through as he leapt into his waiting coupé.

Snapping the car from the curb he bore down the block at rapidly increasing speed. At the corner, an intersection of the broad thoroughfare of Van Ness Avenue, he dashed past a red traffic signal and rounded the turn with a screech of rubber. Wildly blowing his horn; swerving insanely in and out of traffic; ignoring stop lights; narrowly missing machines and pedestrians, he careened north at breakneck speed.

A radio patrol car, cruising in the opposite direction, circled about and took after him. Some blocks farther on a motorcycle officer joined in the chase.

Followed by the two screaming sirens the doctor turned west, smiling grotesquely as he swung the wheel, and continued his insane dash. Roaring past the armed sentry at the Presidio entrance, he held the mad pace down the military street and onto a tree lined roadway paralleling the Golden Gate. Immediately a second motorcycle joined his wake.

The pursuers were bunched not five hundred yards behind him; when the doctor bounded to the right down a rough and tortuous roadway being used in the construction of the Golden Gate bridge. This terminated under the deep shadow of the overhanging cliff in a short landing pier. Striking this at thirty miles, the car thundered along the loose wooden planking, catapulted through the air, and descended with a mighty splash.

By ten-thirty Charlie Martin had arrived (the speed characteristic of his mental mechanism) at the conclusion that you could not locate a man in San Francisco unless you knew his name or his address.

Three times he had started at the corner where he had first met the Skipper, and attempted to reconstruct the route they had taken to the hotel where the man had hired him. Each time he had come to a different hotel, and had wound up by doggedly canvassing every hostelry within a radius of ten blocks. No luck. No man of the Skipper's appearance occupied a room six hundred, and Charlie had finally given up.

As he turned his back on the scene of his labors he had a vague feeling that he'd made a fool of himself—or been made a fool of. He felt all at loose ends; torn between more rum, that berth with "Half-steam," and the mine on Blue Mountain. A blanket of fog misted the tall lights as he turned down Market Street, battening down the homey salt odors of the harbor. Only Charlie's pride in the morning's discovery and loyalty to his owner decided him in favor of the hills.

IT was by the sheerest accident that he yielded to the newsboy wildly crying "Extra!" as he passed the Ferry Building. With the paper tucked under his arm he boarded his boat, and this was well on its way before he opened the sheet and dully scanned the headlines.

DR. KARL GARNET RUNS AMUCK! SHOOTS EX-WIFE AND MATE AND DROWNS SELF!

That was just so much wind in the rigging to Charlie. He was thumbing his way back to the shipping news when the several poses of the late Dr. Garnet caught his eye and jerked him suddenly erect. Blast his timbers! No wonder

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he couldn't find the Skipper. Why, the man was dead!

Aghast, he returned to the front page and devoured the reporter's amazingly complete story of the affair. He turned again to the pictures. No doubt about it; that was the man who had hired him. All the facts being then in his possession, he sat there dumb and befuddled, completely bogged down beneath them.

He had emerged somewhat, but was still mired deep, when he left the boat at Vallejo and started up his car. The paper stated that the doctor had gone suddenly insane. Had he been working for a madman, then? Would that account for all those knots and hitches in his sailing orders? All through his long drive across the valley and into the Sierras Charlie kept thinking back, mulling the matter over in his mind. He moved in circles. From start to finish the whole queer business was beyond him.

The night was nearly spent when he trod on the low band and began the last steep ascent to the mine. It was still dark, but the stars had faded out and the sky paled to a smokey gray. He topped the crest of the canyon; then stiffened suddenly back in his seat and applied the brakes. A light showed through the cabin window. He had left no light. He picked out the shadow of a figure on the wall. Someone was in there—had seen him drive off this morning, and was in there snitching his duffel. Well damn his slippery hull!

Charlie slid from the car and started cautiously down the slope. Apparently the intruder had not heard his approach. There was wind in the pines, and sound carried badly over the crest of the canyon. He'd just size up this pirate, and then board him aplenty.

Within ten paces of the window he stopped and began moving in an arc, sideways, to bring the figure into view. He discovered it bending over the stove. A man about his own build, clad in the same blue denim shirt and blue jeans. He stood there, his back to the window, stuffing something into the stove. A pair of pants—city pants—and now he was setting a match to them. Sparks from a liberal bed of paper and kindling began to issue from the chimney. The figure moved out of focus.

CHARLIE pawed at his chin in consternation. He owned no city pants. He moved again to one side, picked up the figure seated on the bunk drawing on a pair of boots. The man pulled at the laces, lifted his head, gazed full at the window. Snakes an' serpents! Was he seeing double? Had the rum got him?

Staggered at seeing his own image through his own window, Charlie recovered his balance and steeled himself for another look.

No, damn his eyes, if it wasn't the Skipper—or his ghost! Sitting there on his bunk putting on his spare boots. Wearing *his* pants too, by God, and *his* shirt. It was the Skipper, right enough, *but Charlie Martin from stem to stern!*

Charlie's mouth gaped open in mighty awe. This man had gone suddenly insane, murdered two people, and been officially drowned in the Golden Gate. Yet here he was on Blue Mountain. Furthermore he had donned his, Charlie Martin's clothing, and now looked enough like him to fool his own mother. Now what course could you steer from a chart like that?

Charlie sank limply down on a boulder, and his head throbbed as he strove to master these amazing facts. One

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thing was sure; the man wasn't here by accident. Then was it an accident that he and the man were doubles? Was it possible that his whole agreement with this man had some bearing on the present situation?

Cold perspiration broke out all over Charlie at the thought. Still he did not see how the pieces fit.

Not till he rose to his feet at length and took another look through the window did the appalling truth dawn upon him. Garnet, preparing to stuff his coat into the stove, was in the act of removing a pistol from the side pocket. As he drew it forth his glance instinctively took in the door and the window, and his hand patted it speculatively as he cradled it in his hip pocket.

"Son of a fish!" gulped Charlie, his eyes bulging. "So *that's* the course! Crazy, eh? Like a sea-lawyer! Scuttled his car and took to shore, that's why the place was in my name. That's why I couldn't keep firearms or a dog. And that hole I've been diggin'—that hole I made a mine out of—was my grave. Why, the lousy lubber!"

With clenched fists he started toward the cabin; then slowed reflectively to a stop. No, that wouldn't do—something might go wrong. Spill the whole story to the sheriff? No, that might prove bad too. He'd spent some critical hours of yesterday in the city. They might somehow pin those murders onto him! There was surely some way to handle this, but it would take some sharp steering, he could see that.

For a long time he stood there; then a crafty light crept slowly into his troubled eyes. He had it! If he could pass for the man, the man could pass for him. Sure, that was it. Then all he needed was a gun. Just give him a gun and he'd show this scurvy rat that two could swim in this water! He turned and made swiftly off up the slope.

Garnet had been no little put out at finding Charlie absent from the cabin. He had planned on his being there as definitely as he had planned all the other steps in this vengeful crime. Nothing had been left to chance. Eighteen months he had spent in his patient search for Charlie Martin, and the man's simple honesty and blind allegiance to duty played a big part in his calculations.

BUT the doctor refused to be upset. He knew men, and he knew that orders were orders to Charlie, and that his absence would be temporary. This was borne out by the fact that he had not taken his report with him. Today was the day he made his weekly trip to town, and he would return for the report, to have it promptly in the mail. Reading this over, the doctor had found himself in possession of all the last-minute news, exactly as he had planned.

The unfinished postscript troubled him somewhat, but he put it from his mind.

Nothing now could block the grim, inevitable working out of his plan. The man's absence had halted the swiftly moving rhythm of the finale, but it had also had some advantages. It had given him time in which to change his clothing and destroy all evidence of Dr. Karl Garnet, so there would be no anxiety of covering up after Charlie was disposed of.

It was all beautifully simple, because he had given it plenty of thought. The open car door, and the gun which he had tossed after the sinking vehicle, would establish his death beyond question. His disguise en route to this place had been impenetrable. Arrived here,

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he knew Charlie's handwriting, he knew his jargon, and, from his secret trips to the vicinity, he knew all the persons with whom he was familiar.

A shot in the back and a charge of dynamite; then he could drive into town for his next week's supplies; take over his new life with perfect assurance. A year or two here—there *was* no hurry—and he could slip safely abroad where he had sufficient money cached to last the rest of his days. Yes, it was a good plan, and worth the long bitter years he had given to it.

But when the last bit of evidence had been disposed of and when all was in order, and the sun had risen over the hill, the doctor began to feel apprehensive in spite of himself. What was keeping the man? He wanted this business finished. He began to pace the floor, to peer anxiously out the window, his ears cocked for the slightest noise.

Ah! The sound of a motor. He was here at last. Now he would stroll casually out to meet him—tell him that he had come to make that assay— He stepped outside and strode up the slope toward the increasing engine noise.

He topped the shoulder of the hill and gazed down the road that threaded up the canyon. As he stood there the tall, pointed radiator of a late model car swung into view around the last bend. Instinctively he recoiled, shocked completely out of his complacency. It had never once occurred to him that this would not be Charlie.

As a second car rounded the bend, and then a third, he had to fight for the control of his muscles. What a fool he had been to expose himself before Charlie was out of the way! What did these men want? He hadn't the slightest notion.

But he knew that he must face them in the guise of Charlie Martin, and carry it off well.

DESPERATELY he scanned the oncoming cars in an effort to identify their occupants. That beefy hulk in the first was undoubtedly Sheriff Meggs. In the second he caught an impression of stiff brimmed Stetsons and olive drab—someone in the forest service. The third car was trailing—an old Buick, her engine pounding and her radiator belching steam. Low behind the wheel a yellowed straw hat, a pinched and jaundiced countenance—Luke Patterson. The remainder of the party registered as a blur of grim faces spaced with bars of glinting steel. Guns. Every seat was occupied, and every man bore a gun.

Sudden wild fear clutched at the doctor's heart. Could they have come for him, Karl Garnet? Had he somehow made a slip that— No, no, that was impossible. Something had happened in the neighborhood—perhaps a jail break. They were making up a posse. Had come for Charlie to join them. That was it.

The cars drew to a stop. In ominous silence the men piled out. Meggs, his massive frame towering above the others, stood in the lead.

"Mornin' Sheriff." With a mighty effort Garnet forced the greeting through a dry, constricting throat, and moved a step forward.

Luke Patterson, brandishing a double-barreled shotgun, charged excitedly up from the rear.

"Cover 'im, you idjit!" he cried frantically. "He's crazy as a loon. He shot 'em down in cold blood, I tell you, both of 'em."

The outcry fell on the doctor's ears like the blast of doom, and a dozen lifted gun barrels drilled it into his

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panic-stricken mind. It *was* he they were after then! Somehow they had followed the murder trail, and they were after him, Karl Garnet.

Meggs drew an enormous revolver from a shoulder holster, balanced it against his hip, and advanced toward him.

"All right, yuh can see we've got yuh. Stick up your hands and come along peaceful now."

They'd get him. They'd put irons on him. They'd return him to San Francisco, and he'd be lynched! With a wild leap Garnet made the cover of the nearest boulder, scrambled over the hillcrest, and tore madly down the slope. They must never get him—never!

The men surged forward, charged after him down the slope. Insanely he turned, whipped out his revolver, and began firing back at them. Instantly the air was blue with angry cries and gun smoke. Garnet stumbled, fell headlong, but recovered his feet and fled desperately on. The mine tunnel! If he could only make that he could hold them off.

He made the tunnel; even managed to make his way along the cold rocky walls to its very end. But he carried two fatal bullets with him, and when the indignant posse reached him he was dead.

Charles Martin, able seaman, leaned contentedly on the taffrail of the tramp, Hulda, and watched the Golden Gate swing to behind him with the overlapping of the distant promontories.

"Hey," called "Half-Steam," behind him, "you got any kin at a place called Blue Mountain?"

"Why?" Charlie turned and pricked up his ears.

"Interestin' piece just come over the news. Some fella named Martin was diggin' a mine when he struck a rich pocket, and the shock sent him clean off his top."

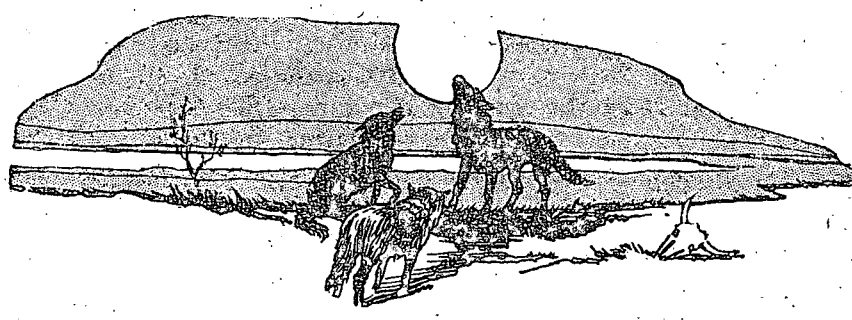
"So? What happened?"

"Early this mornin' he come chargin' down the mountain, borrowed a farmer's gun, then run him into the house with it and shot two of his hogs. Then he went rammin' down the line settin' forest fires, and wound up by robbin' a neighborin' mine and nearly killin' the watchman."

"You don't say," commented Charlie. "What are they gonna do to him?"

"They already done it," grunted "Half-steam." "He got shot resistin' arrest. Now they're tryin' to locate his relatives, and I thought—"

"No kin of mine," cut in Charlie, and faced about to hide a sly smile. "But it's a shame, ain't it? Bad place, them mountains. Natives very hostile—especially to strangers."



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*An Eye for an Eye—but Secret Agent Devrite Wanted to Trade a Blood-Stained Tooth for the Capture of a Vicious Murderer!*

The instant the hood switched off his flash, Devrite struck

DETECTIVE FICTION SECRET AGENT SHORT WEEKLY

# The Dragon's Tooth

By Tom Curry

INSPECTOR HALLIHAN, chief of the Secret Police, awaited his star agent, George Devrite, complete exhibits on the brutal Brennan murder spread across his flat-top desk.

That ivory fang, stained with blood, was the first thing Devrite noted as his tall, wide-shouldered figure slipped into the office—the door was a false front labeled as a beaded-goods firm, seemingly unconnected with Headquarters down Centre Street, since they who bored into the crime world needed every protection that could be afforded. They were picked men, quick in thought and action, trained observers who handled puzzling cases from an angle unobtainable by the regular detective force.

Devrite never made arrests, did not



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give court testimony; when he was through, he made a report to Hallihan who sent in the police to wipe up. The life was perilous, bringing him into contact with thieves and killers; he never knew when he would be fingered and silently murdered; he could call on no one for help since his value lay in remaining unknown to friend and foe.

Hallihan shifted the black cigar in his taut Irish mouth; he liked his hair short, fireman style.

"We want an inside man on this, Devrite," said the big inspector, eyes slits as acrid smoke rolled from his lips. "I'd like to break this case, for William Brennan, the dead man, left a wife and two kids behind, and if we can recover the quarter million dollars' worth of furs stolen from Brennan and Kane's, it will mean all the difference between poverty and comfort to Brennan's family. Brennan was working late last night; he was found this morning in his office, a bullet hole behind the left ear—a .32, fired close up. See the wound?"

Devrite studied the magnified police photographs, taken from every angle, and could mentally picture the complete scene. The victim, a rugged, good-looking man of 45, sat slumped in a swivel chair in front of the large office desk.

"Did the bullet mushroom?" asked Devrite.

"Nope. His head's smashed that way because he was smacked over the skull with a whisky bottle. It laid him out and then they shot him, probably to prevent him from identifying them."

Devrite looked again at the ivory tooth. "And what's this, a dragon tooth?" His grim mouth broke a little.

"You might call it that. Really it's a wolf's fang. It was found where it rolled, under the desk. Those are blood-stains on it, Brennan's blood. We've said nothing about this find, kept it quiet."

Devrite inspected it closely. Hallihan passed him a magnifying glass which he focused on the yellow fang. "What are the four tiny black marks?"

Hallihan shrugged. "Couldn't say."

Devrite went back to the photos. "His expression froze in anger. You say he left a family?"

"Yes. James Kane, Brennan's partner, is terribly wrought up because of the murder and also because the firm will be forced into bankruptcy by the robbery. They had taken a chance and put every dollar they could scrape together into furs, it looked like a big season and they expected a fine year. There was some misunderstanding about the insurance, so they're not fully covered, and other debts will wipe out all that's left. So Brennan's widow receives nothing—Kane doesn't, either. Now I want you to dig in and get a whisper as to what bunch of fur thieves did this."

Devrite nodded. He was a sensitive fellow, attuned to quick impressions, as he had to be to fulfill the tasks allotted him. He felt pity for the real victims: that is, Mrs. Brennan and her children, left behind in a cold world. Brennan was out of it; nothing could bring him back. But Devrite hoped to recover the stolen furs so the family could be provided for. The value of the stolen goods might salvage what was left of life for the widow.

His quickened interest showed in his burning eyes. "Give me a detailed description of the furs."

Hallihan shoved a list toward him. "They were good pieces, most of them. Number one, here, is unusual. A Russian Imperial sable coat, retailing around $30,000. The color is rich

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brown with a reddish sheen. Outside of Chinchilla, which is practically non-existent today, this is the most expensive of furs. The others are mink, ermine—you can easily see for yourself."

"Could Kane identify this Russian sable, if it's found?"

"He ought to be able to. The bill of sale describes it minutely. We got a description also from the importer. The labels would be removed, of course, but there is a secret processor's mark inside the lining."

"Good. I know something of furs and fur thieves. Now, I'd like to have some salesman's cards."

COMPLETE details memorized, the secret agent started on his dangerous mission. Part of his policy was to check every angle of a case. So he went to look at the spot where the murder and robbery had occurred. It was in West 29th, an old brick-front consisting of lofts inhabited mainly by wholesalers. It was around 4 P.M. so they were still open. He took an elevator to the third, and at the rear, near the fire-escape stairs required in such places, was the door marked "BRENNAN AND KANE—WHOLESALE FURRIERS."

Devrite opened the door and stepped inside. "Is Mr. Kane here?" he asked of an office boy.

Kane came from the inner office, where the murder had been done. Devrite could see the desk and chair, with the steel-door storage vaults to the right, doors smashed open.

"I'm the new buyer from Wilson's, Philadelphia," Devrite said breezily, handing Kane a card supplied by Hallihan.

Kane held up a hand. "Sorry, friend. We were cleaned out by robbers. My partner Brennan was killed. Everything is gone, we have no stock to sell."

Kane was a broad man with brown hair and deeply worried blue eyes. "To tell you the truth," he went on, "this is a terrible blow to me. As we were partners, I'm responsible for Brennan's debts as well as my own. I trusted the insuring to him and he thought I'd taken care of it—" He shrugged. "However, if you're looking for some good buys, I'll give you a tip on a firm that's disposing of all their stock—"

He was interrupted by the opening of the outer door. A handsome woman of 40, clad in black, two boys with her, entered. The secret agent immediately decided this was Mrs. Brennan. Her face was ravished by grief lines, eyes red from weeping. The children were too young to realize their loss.

"Mrs. Brennan!" cried Kane, starting forward.

She took his hand. "I could hardly force myself to come here," she said in a low voice. "But—I had to. Just how bad are things, Mr. Kane? You said over the phone that—"

Kane shook his head sadly. "I want to help you all I can," he told her with deep sympathy in his voice. "But there's not much I can do. The situation's not what you'd call bright and cheery."

Devrite did not miss the mother's quick glance at the children; he was aware she was thinking of them and not of herself.

"Come back later," Kane said to him, waving him out. "I've got to talk to Mrs. Brennan now." He went into the other office with the woman.

Devrite took his leave. He knew that he desired above all to aid the

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woman; the case took on an increased interest in his mind.

That night, after supper, the secret policeman, in a studied costume and his face wearing the correct expression to fit the part he played, sat in the rear of a saloon talking with a man whose appearance labeled him of the crime world. Bags Nurheim was, Devrite knew, a fur thief. He had done five years in Sing Sing, and according to Hallihan's records, took part now and then in a job. Devrite had his ways of making such connections, Hallihan had helped at his request. There was a man desperately afraid of the police; without ever having seen Devrite or knowing the reason, he had given an open-sesame to Nurheim's confidence through Hallihan.

"What can I do for you, then?" asked Bags.

Devrite looked over his shoulder, feigning nervousness. "I work for a fur house," he whispered. "Listen—Frost said I could trust you, but I'm losin' my nerve. You won't squeal?"

"Get that offa your mind, bud," replied Nurheim with amused superiority. "You ain't had much experience, have you?"

"This is the first time."

"Well, spill it. You want to crack your own firm?"

Devrite licked his lips and nodded knowingly.

"What's the lay? Maybe I can help."

"I'm sore at my boss," whispered Devrite, after another look around. "I want to get even. Not only that, I need money. If I don't get it, I—well, I'll be in the soup. How much is a good tip and a duplicate vault combination worth?"

"That depends. How much is there?"

DEVRITE was feeling his way. Later he hoped to pump Nurheim about fur thieves in the Brennan and Kane district. Bags supposedly was well-informed on the subject.

"Fifty grand there," he replied, lips wet.

"You'd take maybe two thousand for a tip. Where's the joint?"

"West 28th, Number —" began Devrite.

Nurheim did not let him finish. His face twisted and fear sprang into his hard eyes. "Nothin' doin'. You're on a bum steer. Lay off."

"Why?" demanded Devrite, disappointedly.

"Because you'll find yourself lyin' in the gutter lookin' up through bullet holes in your skull," snarled Bags, rising.

"Tell me why. What's wrong?" insisted Devrite.

"You fool, Wally Olsen runs from West 23rd to West 34th, from Fifth Avenue to the North River. Anybody pulls a fur job there has to answer to him—and believe me, it's some question. He's got a hundred men. Plenty have tried to muscle in—that's why so many corpses have been found on the curb and in the Bay."

"You mean no one pulls a job there without Olsen?"

"You catch on quick, don't you?" said Bags sarcastically. He added, pity in his tone, "You amatoors give me a laugh. Now, I'm a busy man so I'll have to ask you to excuse me." He left Devrite.

CLAD in an immaculate tuxedo, the undercoverman looked across the vast hotel dining-room at Wally Olsen and his wife. So high was Olsen

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that the common name "thief" could scarcely be applied to him. He was a master criminal. Devrite had what slight information Hallihan could furnish on Olsen, who had never been arrested.

Olsen was a huge man with fat shoulders and hips, three chins softening his otherwise vicious face. He wore gold-rimmed spectacles and his outer shell was that of a well-to-do, rather vulgar business man. He had on full dress with large diamond studs; white cuffs also scintillated with the gems. His black hair was sparse, combed slick. There was something repulsive about him.

With the master was his wife, very blond, about 35. Good living had stoutened her and put creases in her heavily-shaded face but she was still garishly pretty. Her hair was elegantly done; she wore an emerald necklace worth at least fifty thousand dollars, and other jewels glittered all over her. Carelessly draped on the back of her gilt chair as she nibbled at a quail-in-nest was a white ermine opera coat that Devrite appraised at around fifteen thousand dollars, more or less.

The secret agent had wasted no time trying to contact Olsen through the underworld. Such a man never took part in violent crime but was the director, the man of ideas. The Brennan-Kane robbery was only another of those criminal thoughts. It would be impossible, or at least the work of months, to trap him by roping. All Devrite could do was observe him from outside as he was now doing. Olsen had been under surveillance many times, since whispers about him permeated the Underworld. But Devrite, with many disadvantages, held this one over the usual operative: he was not known to be connected with the police. Olsen would have experts who were acquainted with every detective on the force.

The Olsens ate slowly, deliberately; wines sparkled with every course, expensive vintages fitted to the dish: burgundy and champagne, finally a cordial. Around 8:30 they took their leave. They lived at this great Park Avenue hotel.

Outside, Devrite noted that their limousine, with liveried chauffeur and footman, was of bullet-proof steel. "Metropolitan Opera House," he heard the fat Olsen growl as he pulled himself in by a silken strap.

There were plenty of people about so Devrite could stand quite close without danger of attracting attention. The limousine was about to start when a very large, very smooth-shaven young man in tuxedo and black fedora hat pulled at a rakish angle over his eyes, hurried up the sidewalk. He called out breathlessly: "Oh, Mr. Olsen!"

Devrite, a cigarette trailing smoke between his long fingers, eyes fixed across the avenue—from the corner of them he could see the limousine—noticed the stiffening of chauffeur and footman. Undoubtedly they were an armed bodyguard.

But the large young man was evidently a trusted friend. He came close to Olsen, stuck his head in the window, and whispered in Olsen's large, hairy ear. After a moment Devrite could see the flush mounting Olsen's cheeks; the thick lips muttered a curse. Olsen reached in his pocket and handed his wife a small white envelope such as encases tickets. He left her and stood beside the young man.

"Take Mrs. Olsen to the opera," he ordered.

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DEVRITE shivered in the bitter, violent wind that swept the avenue. Olsen and his friend got into a taxi they hailed. The secret agent sidled up and heard the large young man say, "East 35th and Lexington."

Devrite arrived there as they paid off their cab. Olsen and his friend strolled down Lexington, Devrite after them. They paused near a retail fur store, a new sign over the door saying, "MADISON'S : BARGAINS IN FURS." Despite the hour the shop was open. The large young man nodded to Olsen, who waited outside while his companion entered.

Excitement possessed Devrite as he slipped into a dark doorway, craning his neck to watch Olsen's elephantine figure. Was this an outlet of the master robber? For Wally Olsen had a great organization, he stole furs and stocked dummy stores after various changes to prevent identification. That was more profitable than allowing others to reap the retail profits. There was, he decided, a possibility that they intended to raid this store; perhaps he was seeing them get the "lay," necessary information to supply their shock troops.

He drew in his head as Olsen swung ponderously; the large young man had beckoned his master and the big man went inside the store. Devrite, a slim shadow in the yellow light, slipped past the show windows, glanced in. He saw another man he had not before observed, close to the front, but Olsen and his lieutenant were not in sight, they had retired to the rear.

His quick eyes sought a way to the back of the building; there was a service alley, dark with shadows, and he tiptoed along the blank brick wall of the store toward the courts. Near the rear he saw slits of light from a curtained window and went to it, hoping to see in. As he swung to creep close the muzzle of a pistol was rammed into his back ribs.

A harsh whisper warned, "If you make any noise I'll kill you. Walk backward with your hands out in front."

Devrite, heart leaping and pounding madly at this sudden shock, obeyed; close behind was the gunman, flat hammer of a .45 automatic all the way back, finger on the trigger—

They drew away from the window into the recesses of the court. "Turn around but keep your paws out," ordered his captor in a low voice. "I want to have a look at you."

Devrite slowly swung. In the dim light he saw his adversary's bulk, a tall man in a dark suit and hat and shirt, only the whiteness of his face plainly visible. What Devrite made out of the features was gross, mouth a cruel line; he did not miss the blue-steel Colt aimed at his vitals. Then the man drew a small flash from his side pocket and switched it on, full in Devrite's eyes.

"Talk fast," he snapped. "Where do you come in? Why are you after the boss?"

"I'm not after anybody," lied Devrite.

"NO? D'you think I'm a fool?" Devrite could almost feel the lead from the gun; his answer had angered the gunman.

"Wait—I'm a friend of Bags Nurheim."

It was a fortunate thought, for the man snickered and relaxed. "What, that guy? What's he want?"

"He wants to knock over this store."

"So that's it. Well, I dunno. I'll have to ask—"



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Half blinded, Devrite could yet make out the other's fierce face. He saw suspicion again cross it. "Since when did Bags send his spotters out dressed in tux? And—say, you were over at Brennan and Kane's this afternoon, that's where I seen you before. You acted different then. I was hidin' down the hall and seen you go in."

It was going from bad to worse, thought Devrite. Olsen had had this spy watching Kane's he had seen the agent enter, posing as a salesman.

"You come with me," snarled the gunman. "We'll see what Tim and Wally got to say. If you're one of Bag's boys, he'll identify you. Otherwise, Gawd help you!"

"Okay," shrugged Devrite.

"But keep quiet, understand? I don't want 'em hearin' us inside—if I can help it." In that instant the secret agent struck, unerringly. He switched off his flash.

The side of his hard right hand snapped with a dull smack against the gunman's windpipe. Devrite knew that blow too well to miss. The force drove the man's Adam's apple into his windpipe, stifling him; pain and shock rendered him speechless. As he staggered, Devrite's left hand grasped the pistol, twisting the gun from the anguish-relaxed grip. Within a second the situation was reversed; Devrite now had the upper hand, and he leaped in, lips baring his teeth as he brought the heavy pistol barrel in a sweeping arc against the base of his opponent's skull. The man crumpled up like a rag doll, softly hitting the cement.

BREATH coming fast, Devrite considered. Ears wide, wondering if the sounds had penetrated to those inside, he waited. No door opened. He knelt for a moment by the gunman. He was annoyed; it might ruin his work on this case. His long fingers felt the head; they came away sticky with warm blood.

He went to the window; the black shade was drawn, but he could just see past the margin. The back room was empty now.

At the street Olsen and the large young man, who must be the "Tim" mentioned by the guard, were emerging. Tim carried a large cardboard box in his arms, such a box, Devrite thought, as a fur coat might be packed in. Olsen and Tom strolled to the corner and hailed a cab.

The agent had to make a quick choice. He decided to stay on Olsen rather than return to the man he had laid out, so he caught another taxi and followed. Olsen went to the Metropolitan Opera House, the undercover-man saw him go in. Tim delivered the box to Olsen's hotel suite and then went around to a saloon where he settled down for the evening.

Devrite phoned Hallihan. "Will you pick up a man behind Madison's?" He gave the address. "He's one of Olsen's bodyguards. I had to knock him out. Don't scare anyone in the store, and hold him incommunicado as long as possible so as to give me a chance."

"Okay," replied the inspector.

Next afternoon, Madame Olsen went to shop along Park Avenue. The town car carried her. The secret agent was watching. For now she wore a new fur coat, a very voluminous, rich brown fur with a reddish tinge to it.

Devrite hurried to a phone and rang Hallihan again. "I think Mrs. Olsen's wearing the Russian sable stolen from Brennan and Kane," he reported.

"Great," cried Hallihan. "If it's the coat, we have a powerful lever.



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We'll pick her up at once." He added, "Men were sent to Madison's after you called last night. When they got there, the store was shut, and they found no one in the back court."

Devrite was piqued. "Then you'd better hurry," he advised, "because Olsen may realize we're after him. I think I made his man believe I was another thief, but since he's escaped he may get the idea I'm a detective."

And from a safe distance, Devrite watched detectives from Headquarters arrest Mrs. Olsen, who made voluble protests but was driven off to the precinct station. The interested agent followed, eager to know the results. From down the street he saw, after a time, James Kane ride up in a cab and enter the station house. Then he went off to rest and eat.

Later he called at Hallihan's hidden office. The sour expression on the big inspector's face made his heart drop. "That was a bum steer, Devrite," growled Hallihan, "on the sable coat. Olsen has a bill of sale for it from Madison's."

"What about that hidden processor's mark?"—Devrite was deeply chagrined.

"Not there. I saw the coat myself. There was just a slight imperfection where the mark might have been, but not enough."

"And Kane?"

"He couldn't identify the coat as belonging to his stock. Now Olsen's threatening to sue for false arrest."

It was a hard jolt for the undercoverman. The case to him was a maze; he needed a key to the answer but could not find it.

He was dejected when he left Hallihan. This victory of Olsen, the loss of that gunman who might have proved a valuable witness, crushed him; he knew that Hallihan would be made to suffer if Mrs. Olsen decided to press her charge.

He was sure that key he sought must be at Madison's. Olsen had carried off a large box, and his wife next day had blossomed forth in new sables; there was that slight imperfection where the secret mark might have been eradicated—he must find a new angle of approach.

He started on his new track by reassuming his salesman rôle, and visiting Madison's. There the clerk he had seen the night before came to wait on him. Fur coats hung thick in the racks.

"I'm from Wilson's, Philadelphia," Devrite told him, passing him a card. "Looking for stock for our two stores."

"We sell retail," replied the clerk, "but if you want a big enough block, maybe we can accommodate you."

Devrite knew how to examine furs. And at last he made an offer on a block of stylish mixed coats.

The clerk hesitated. "Do you mind if I telephone? I'm not the owner, I'll have to ask about this."

"Go to it. I'll have a look in front while you do it."

THE clerk went to the rear office—it was there that Olsen, Tim and the proprietor had been closeted the evening before. The clerk shut the intervening door. The secret agent, with a catlike bound, hurried to it, put his ear to the keyhole. A dial clicked, and he was disappointed, not hearing the number given by voice, but then the clerk asked, "Is this the Harvey? Let me have Room 1458." And a few moments later: "This is Frank. I have a buyer here from Philadelphia. He's offered $8,000 for that set of mixed. Okay."

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Devrite was at the front again when he emerged, smiled. "They're yours," Frank said.

"Then I'll be back in the morning, with a draft."

He shook hands with the clerk, who promised to have the furs ready packed. He hurried to the Hotel Harvey, in the West Forties.

The room clerk at the desk said, "1458? That's Mr. Kane. He's out now, at his business."

An electric shock passed through Devrite. Kane! Of Brennan and Kane. Hooked to Wally Olsen, the fur thief. Here was a connection he must uncover, must gain evidence to prove it conclusively, there was yet much to be done. . . .

And at Kane's office, he was again the buyer from Wilson's. Kane was there, and the secret agent studied the man's pasty face.

"When I was in a couple of days ago," said Devrite, "you told me you could send me where I could pick up some bargains, Mr. Kane. I've been around a lot but I'm not yet satisfied."

"Oh, yes," said Kane. There was a gruff note in his voice, he seemed very nervous. "If you want some good stuff, try Madison's. They'll sell wholesale if you buy enough. Have a drink." He pointed to the half empty whisky flask on the desk.

Devrite said "Thanks," and helped himself to a small shot. "Can you have dinner with me tonight and see a show?" he asked pleasantly. "I don't know anybody in New York."

"I'd like to," replied Kane, "but I'm afraid I'll be busy. Make it another time."

The case had suddenly taken on new life, by his discovery of Kane's interest in Madison's. He felt he had the key he had been seeking. After going out, he stayed in the street below, and around 5 Kane left his office and went to his hotel, the Harvey. Devrite saw him out again at 7. Kane ate a hurried supper at a restaurant and took a cab over to Madison's.

The secret agent returned to the Harvey. On the 14th floor, Kane's suite was at the far end of a long corridor. With a skeleton key Devrite opened the door and stepped inside, carefully shut the door and switched on the lights. He found himself in the living-room of a three-room apartment, could see the bath and bedroom beyond.

He began a minute search, looking for evidence to connect Kane with Olsen. The living-room yielded nothing, nothing save the ordinary appurtenances of life. From the high windows Devrite could look out across the sweep of white-lighted Broadway, black wind clouds scudding across the winter night sky.

Next he entered the bedroom. The bed was made, the room swept, but Kane had left his clothing scattered on the floor. A bureau drawer was open. Devrite examined all papers, found letters from duns addressed to Kane. There was a stock of liquor showing hard use. In a small drawer at the top of the chiffonier he found a watch fob. His quick eyes discarded it at first, then returned to it. Something was wrong with the fob; then he realized that the pendant was missing. Small yellow-gold prongs were empty. . . .

He drew his breath swiftly in. The sudden click of a key in the lock and the secret agent's breath failed him for an instant; he stood, gasping, knowing he was trapped. He had no pistol on him, it was not his policy to go armed, for obvious reasons.

There was a clothes closet near at hand, and the only thing he could do

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was step in and pull the door to, pressing himself against hanging suits.

He left a small crack to peek from. Past his line of vision stepped a swift-moving figure. He heard the gulping breath; it was Kane, his face was livid. He made a beeline for the liquor and began to down one glass after another, and Devrite could see his hand shook so violently he could scarcely hold the glass.

Then Kane leaped up, seized a large suitcase from under the bureau and began to throw things into the bag. His face and lips worked, and he would pause to drink. In a few moments the fur man would come to the closet.

SUDDENLY Kane uttered a strangled cry of fear. He dropped his packing and fumbled at his pocket, drawing a shining revolver. He aimed it Devrite thought for an instant it was at him. But men came through from the other room and paused close to Devrite's hiding-place. One was Tim, Olsen's man; the other two, backing him up, were obviously gunmen, the smooth type used by higher-grade gangs.

"Put down that rod, you fool," snarled Tim. He had a cocked .45 automatic pistol in his big hand.

Kane licked his lips. "What do you want?" he cried. "Why were you following me?"

"You know," growled Tim, taking a step forward. "Why did you kill Geaney? What'd you do with his body?"

"I didn't kill him. I found him lying in the court behind the store. I was afraid of the police, so I carried him into the cellar and tied him up. He's still down there, he died during the night, he was bleeding and hurt—"

"You yellow rat, you dirty slob," Tim said ferociously. "You're gettin' what you deserve. You croaked him, he was my pal—"

Devrite knew Tim was going to shoot. His hand closed on the toe of a boot in the closet. The secret agent saved Kane's life, leaving the closet in a bound. The three men watched Kane, backs to the closet; the undercoverman brought the point of the heel over the nearest man's head, knocking him senseless. He hit Tim a paralyzing blow in the kidney so that, as the large young man fired his pistol, the bullet was deflected by his spasmodic jerk. The third gunman, swinging on Devrite, pistol rising to position, suddenly pitched forward on his face. A sharp explosion rang out after the roar of the automatic; Kane had pulled his trigger, the slug striking the third man's ribs.

For an instant the secret agent dealt with the violent Tim, who, recovering, tried to shoot him. The ju-jutsu hold of the trained Devrite tore away the big man's gun, broke two fingers in his right hand, making him scream with pain.

"Kill him—kill him," shrieked Kane, face red as fire.

Devrite struck Tim scientifically on the chin, the blow jarring the teeth together; the large youth folded up on floor.

Devrite faced Kane.

"It's—you!" gasped Kane, lowering his revolver. "You saved my life, friend." His face clouded over. "But—how did you happen to be here, how'd you get in—?"

"I was waiting for you," lied Devrite coolly. "I thought you might change your mind and would go to a night club with me. I came up and was waiting for you—"

Kane was too excited to question

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anything now; all he knew was that Devrite had saved him from sudden death.

"You'll have to excuse me," he muttered, pouring himself a huge drink and pushing the bottle at Devrite. "I'm in a hurry. Got to get out of here." He began to pack again, keeping one eye on the gunmen lying on the floor.

Devrite slipped out, left him there. He hurried to the desk. "There's been a murder in 1458," he gasped. "I was passing through the hall and heard the shots. Hurry, get on up there!"

He saw the house detectives start for the upper floor. Then he hurried around to Hallihan's.

Next day he again visited his chief. Hallihan seemed very pleased.

"You cleaned up well, Devrite. We've got Tim, who is Olsen's lieutenant, and those other two. Kane has identified the Russian sable for us, so we have Olsen for grand larceny at least. We'll put him away this time and smash his mob. The house detectives held the four in 1458 till the police came last night. And we found that body in the cellar at Madison's. The stolen goods from Brennan and Kane's were there, too, so Mrs. Brennan will be provided for."

"Kane has talked, then?"

"Oh, sure. That wolf fang, or dragon's tooth as you call it, broke him. You were right about it, what you said last night: it's the ornament off Kane's watchfob, a souvenir a trapper once gave him. It was mounted in the fob you found in Kane's drawer. The tiny black marks were made by the gold prongs gripping the ivory shaft of the tooth.

"Kane had been speculating funds and Brennan grew suspicious, went to the office that night to check the books. Kane caught him at it, there was a quarrel. Kane smashed his partner over the head with a bottle, then killed him to save himself. When he lifted the heavy Brennan into the chair, the wolf fang was brushed out of its setting and rolled under the desk without Kane knowing it at the time. To cover the murder, and also make money, Kane called Frank Brown, who acted as the clerk at Madison's. They had a truck they moved the furs off in that night, smashing the vault doors to make it look like a robbery. They opened up Madison's where they meant to sell the loot and clean up."

Hallihan continued: "As soon as Wally Olsen heard of the huge robbery in his district, he was furious and set about finding who did it. With his underworld connections, he quickly eliminated everybody, and guessed Kane had maneuvered it. His men traced Kane to Madison's. Tim and Olsen went to shake him down, and Kane gave them the $30,000 Russian Imperial Sable coat to satisfy them. Kane warned them of that secret mark, which they removed."

"The dragon's tooth," observed Devrite, "bit deep!"

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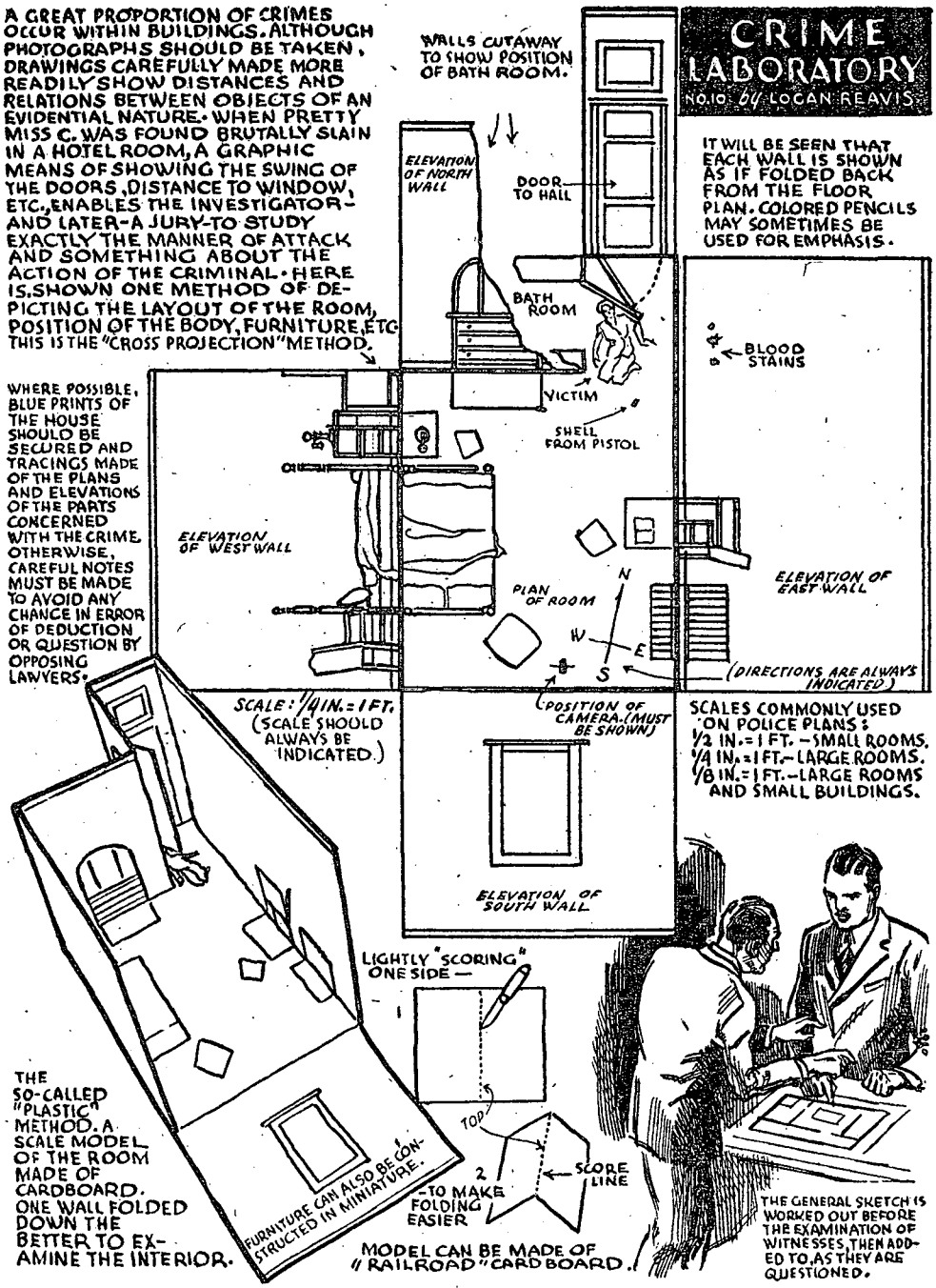
CRIME LABORATORY
NO. 10. BY LOGAN REAVIS
A GREAT PROPORTION OF CRIMES OCCUR WITHIN BUILDINGS. ALTHOUGH PHOTOGRAPHS SHOULD BE TAKEN, DRAWINGS CAREFULLY MADE MORE READILY SHOW DISTANCES AND RELATIONS BETWEEN OBJECTS OF AN EVIDENTIAL NATURE. WHEN PRETTY MISS C. WAS FOUND BRUTALLY SLAIN IN A HOTEL ROOM, A GRAPHIC MEANS OF SHOWING THE SWING OF THE DOORS, DISTANCE TO WINDOW, ETC., ENABLES THE INVESTIGATOR—AND LATER—A JURY—TO STUDY EXACTLY THE MANNER OF ATTACK AND SOMETHING ABOUT THE ACTION OF THE CRIMINAL. HERE IS SHOWN ONE METHOD OF DEPICTING THE LAYOUT OF THE ROOM, POSITION OF THE BODY, FURNITURE, ETC. THIS IS THE "CROSS PROJECTION" METHOD.
WALLS CUTAWAY TO SHOW POSITION OF BATH ROOM.
ELEVATION OF NORTH WALL
DOOR TO HALL
BATH ROOM
IT WILL BE SEEN THAT EACH WALL IS SHOWN AS IF FOLDED BACK FROM THE FLOOR PLAN. COLORED PENCILS MAY SOMETIMES BE USED FOR EMPHASIS.
BLOOD STAINS
VICTIM
SHELL FROM PISTOL
WHERE POSSIBLE, BLUE PRINTS OF THE HOUSE SHOULD BE SECURED AND TRACINGS MADE OF THE PLANS AND ELEVATIONS OF THE PARTS CONCERNED WITH THE CRIME. OTHERWISE, CAREFUL NOTES MUST BE MADE TO AVOID ANY CHANCE IN ERROR OF DEDUCTION OR QUESTION BY OPPOSING LAWYERS.
ELEVATION OF WEST WALL
PLAN OF ROOM
ELEVATION OF EAST WALL
N
W
E
S
(DIRECTIONS ARE ALWAYS INDICATED)
SCALE: 1/4 IN. = 1 FT. (SCALE SHOULD ALWAYS BE INDICATED.)
POSITION OF CAMERA. (MUST BE SHOWN)
SCALES COMMONLY USED ON POLICE PLANS:
1/2 IN. = 1 FT. — SMALL ROOMS.
1/4 IN. = 1 FT. — LARGE ROOMS.
1/8 IN. = 1 FT. — LARGE ROOMS AND SMALL BUILDINGS.
ELEVATION OF SOUTH WALL
LIGHTLY "SCORING" ONE SIDE —
THE SO-CALLED "PLASTIC" METHOD. A SCALE MODEL OF THE ROOM MADE OF CARDBOARD. ONE WALL FOLDED DOWN THE BETTER TO EXAMINE THE INTERIOR.
FURNITURE CAN ALSO BE CONSTRUCTED IN MINIATURE.
TOP
2
SCORE LINE
—TO MAKE FOLDING EASIER
MODEL CAN BE MADE OF "RAILROAD" CARD BOARD.
THE GENERAL SKETCH IS WORKED OUT BEFORE THE EXAMINATION OF WITNESSES, THEN ADDED TO AS THEY ARE QUESTIONED.

Every effort should be made to record exactly the appearance and position of every article directly related to a crime. While a complete, detailed report must necessarily be written to describe the character and setting of the occurrence, an accurate drawing certainly acts as a chart



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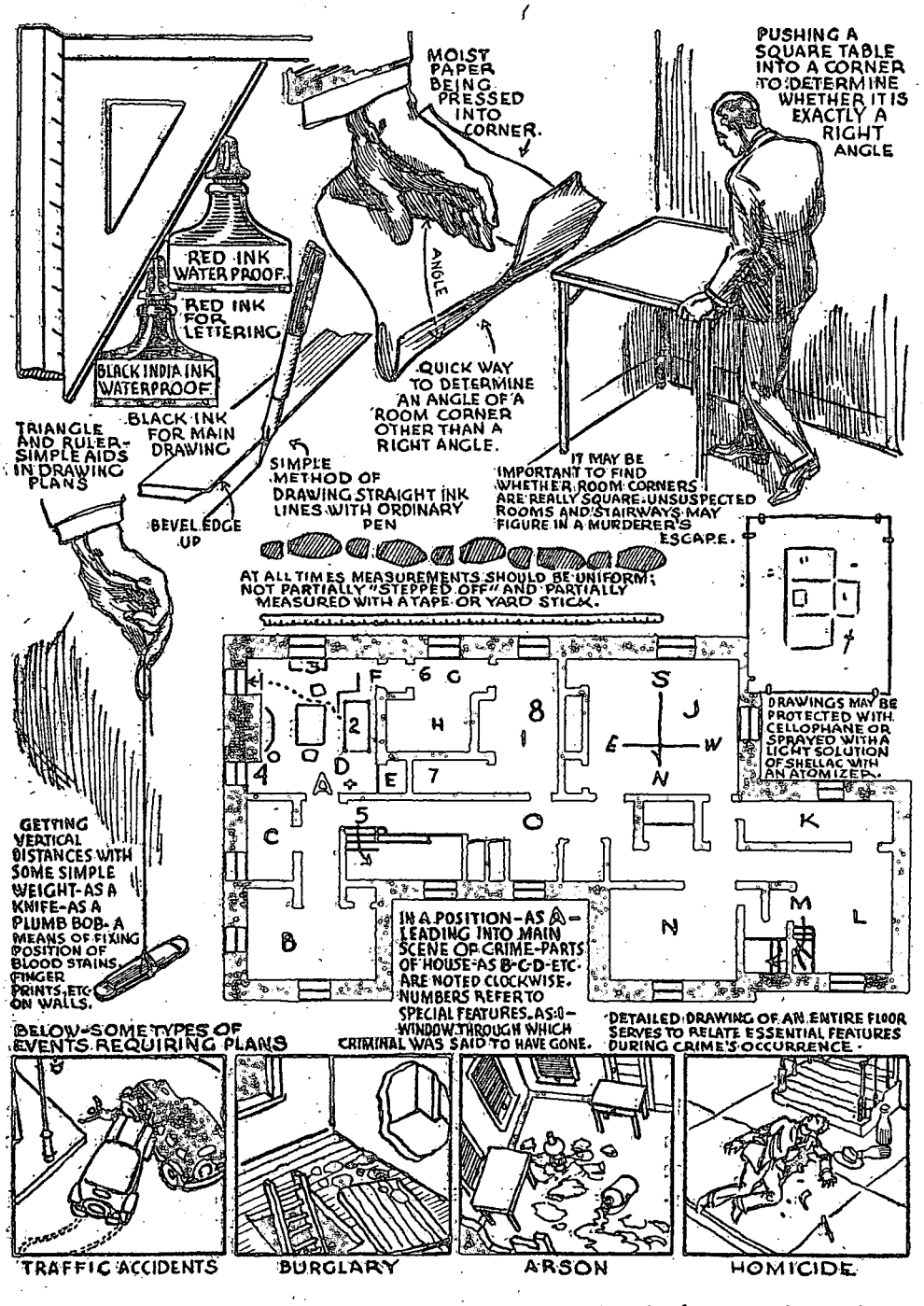
MOIST PAPER BEING PRESSED INTO CORNER.
ANGLE
PUSHING A SQUARE TABLE INTO A CORNER TO DETERMINE WHETHER IT IS EXACTLY A RIGHT ANGLE
RED INK WATER PROOF.
RED INK FOR LETTERING.
BLACK INDIA INK WATERPROOF.
BLACK INK FOR MAIN DRAWING
TRIANGLE AND RULER-SIMPLE AIDS IN DRAWING PLANS
BEVEL EDGE UP
SIMPLE METHOD OF DRAWING STRAIGHT INK LINES WITH ORDINARY PEN
QUICK WAY TO DETERMINE AN ANGLE OF A ROOM CORNER OTHER THAN A RIGHT ANGLE.
IT MAY BE IMPORTANT TO FIND WHETHER ROOM CORNERS ARE REALLY SQUARE. UNSUSPECTED ROOMS AND STAIRWAYS MAY FIGURE IN A MURDERER'S ESCAPE.
AT ALL TIMES MEASUREMENTS SHOULD BE UNIFORM; NOT PARTIALLY "STEPPED OFF" AND PARTIALLY MEASURED WITH A TAPE OR YARD STICK.
DRAWINGS MAY BE PROTECTED WITH CELLOPHANE OR SPRAYED WITH A LIGHT SOLUTION OF SHELLAC WITH AN ATOMIZER.
GETTING VERTICAL DISTANCES WITH SOME SIMPLE WEIGHT-AS A KNIFE-AS A PLUMB BOB-A MEANS OF FIXING POSITION OF BLOOD STAINS, FINGER PRINTS, ETC. ON WALLS.
IN A POSITION-AS A-LEADING INTO MAIN SCENE OF CRIME-PARTS OF HOUSE-AS B-C-D-ETC. ARE NOTED CLOCKWISE. NUMBERS REFER TO SPECIAL FEATURES-AS 0-WINDOW THROUGH WHICH CRIMINAL WAS SAID TO HAVE GONE.
DETAILED DRAWING OF AN ENTIRE FLOOR SERVES TO RELATE ESSENTIAL FEATURES DURING CRIME'S OCCURRENCE.
BELOW-SOME TYPES OF EVENTS REQUIRING PLANS
TRAFFIC ACCIDENTS
BURGLARY
ARSON
HOMICIDE

of what happened, and perhaps suggests a course of action. Such a sketch, presented as evidence, should aid a jury to understand with the utmost clarity every element in the commission of the crime. The next CRIME LABORATORY feature, dealing with *burnt paper*, will appear soon.



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"I haven't much cash here," Montfort was saying

# *The* Fatal Detail

**By Preston Grady**

CRIME DOES NOT SHORT

*From Flop-House to Riches —That Was "Dude" Duncan's Dream, and He Meant to Get There with Only Eighty-Two Cents and a Gun*

THE clerk was a timid little oldster who really shouldn't have been trying to hold a job in a two-bit joint inhabited chiefly by toughs; he cowered in the doorway as Duncan's bloodshot eyes glared at him.

"But you have no luggage, sir, and you haven't paid us anything for the last two days and usually we—"

Duncan swore. "All right!"

He swung his bare legs off the bed and fished truculently in a pocket of his trousers, which hung on a chair near him. He found a fifty-cent piece and flung it. The clerk fumbled the catch and picked up the coin from the floor



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nervously, muttering something about he just worked here and it was a rule of the establishment.

"Get the hell out!" Duncan commanded.

"Yes, sir," said the clerk, and got.

Duncan stood up and immediately sat down again. The grimy walls seemed to be reeling. Devils hammered in his head. How long had he been drunk? How long had he been in this dismal room? Four days? Five days? A week? Not that it made much difference. His idea had proved sound.

No dick had thought of seeking "Dude" Duncan in a flop-house.

He smiled a little, without humor. He must look pretty damned tough, now, if he'd been here for two days without paying and they hadn't thrown him out. His gaze drifted to the brandy bottle which sat on the floor within reach. After a healthy swig he made a better job of standing and crossed to stare at his image in the speckled mirror atop the butt-charred bureau.

He *did* look tough. His handsome jaw had sprouted a bushy set of whiskers. He combed his hair and regarded himself more reflectively. He didn't look so tough now. More sort of distinguished, as if the beard had been grown purposely. A crafty plan formed in his mind.

Putting on his clothes he discovered that his remaining cash totaled eighty-seven cents. It would have to be this morning. He had to have dough—cool dough. And it was early enough, judging by the slant of the sun through the dusty window and the smell of the air through the broken pane.

There was no phone in the room. He went out into the hall and found two, one a nickel-in-the-slot machine for outside calls and the other a house instrument. He spent a nickel and dialed Douglas 8680.

"Pan-American Airways," a voice responded.

"When's the next passenger plane for the Orient?"

"Today at twelve-thirty."

That was a piece of luck. "I want to go to China. Can I get a seat?"

"Of course. Your name, please?"

Duncan hung up and lifted the receiver of the house phone.

"What time is it?"

"Eight twenty-five, sir," came the voice of the timid clerk.

That was very nifty, too. "Call me a taxi," Duncan said.

"I beg your pardon?" Patrons of the Hotel Elegant didn't use taxis.

"A taxi, damn you!" Duncan shouted. "I'll be down in five minutes and I want it waiting at the front door!"

"Yes, sir. Very good, sir."

The taxi was there when he got downstairs and he ducked into it with his hat pulled low.

"Nob Hill."

The taxi pulled away at the order and turned off Howard Street at Third. There were the usual straggling bums around the dingy eateries, the usual drunks, even at this hour, and everything looked all right but Duncan had a feeling of strangeness. There was something he couldn't figure out.

MARKET Street, too, looked somehow queer. He slouched lower in his seat as the taxi crossed it and swept by a traffic cop. By the time he was delivered before the swank apartment house at the peak, however, he had shrugged off the strange feeling as part of his hangover. He gave the driver the eighty-two cents.

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The entrance presented a difficulty. He couldn't very well announce himself. Maybe there would be a service entrance, and maybe the door there would be unlocked. He went around on the side street and looked. There was, and it was.

Ascending in the dimness of the stairwell he removed his gun from his shoulder holster and put it in his coat pocket and left his hand in there gripping it. His hand was sweaty. His heart pounded. It wasn't from nervousness, he tried to reassure himself; even the newspapers admitted that "Dude" Duncan hadn't a nerve in his body; it was just the hangover and the stair climbing.

Roderick Montfort was emerging from the apartment's front door when Duncan got there. Everything was going fine. Duncan smiled again, grimly.

"Back in," he said, and took the gun out of his pocket to show he wasn't bluffing.

Montfort gaped. He was a tall man, gray at the temples, with a ruddy complexion and a powerful figure.

"What do you want?"

"Shut up and go back in. Don't be a fool. This gun is cocked."

The banker obeyed. A subtle change had come over Duncan with the encounter, as always when he went to work. Before, he had been nondescript except for a certain animal attractiveness, a surface hardness. Now his head jutted forward a little, his body had assumed a crouch more felt than seen, and the gun rested easily and firmly in his hand close to his side. His posture was akin to that of a cat stalking prey. His eyes glittered. This man would kill without the slightest compunction. Anyone could sense it. Roderick Montfort sensed it.

In the foyer Duncan asked him, "Who's here?"

"No one but my wife and the servants."

Montfort's face was beet-red. His hands hung stiffly. He stared at the muzzle of the gun. "What do you want—my wallet?"

"How many servants?" Duncan maintained a distance.

"Two."

"Call them."

In the living room Montfort pressed a button. A portly pop-eyed butler entered and regarded Duncan in stupefied silence.

"What about the other one?" Duncan asked Montfort. "Will he come if you ring again?"

"Possibly," said Montfort.

"All right," said Duncan. "Try it."

Montfort rang insistently and presently a young Chinese came. Duncan locked the pair in a closet with a warning to keep quiet and addressed Montfort again.

"Now your wife."

"If you—"

"Shut up and do as I tell you."

Pressing his lips tightly together in an effort to control his anger, Montfort crossed carefully to a door and knocked.

"Clara!" he called.

"What is it, dear?" his wife answered through the panel. "I thought you'd gone."

"Come out a minute, will you?"

SHE opened the door, stepped across the threshold, and halted, frozen, with her eyes on Duncan. Thirtyish, tall, trim, shapely, she had a face of delicate, poised beauty which became startled into something more than the shock of confronting a bandit.

"Charles!" she cried.

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Her husband stared at her. "You know this man?"

She said nothing.

"Go on, Clara," said Duncan. "Tell him."

"Oh, God!" she muttered. Misery and panic crushed her like a weight. At Duncan's challenging leer she told her husband, "He's—he's my brother."

"But I thought your brother died of tuberculosis in Arizona several years ago." Montfort was thunderstruck.

His wife clenched her hands against her temples. "I lied to you," she whispered huskily.

"Why?"

Duncan said, "Go on, Clara." He saw her torture and was unmoved. His teeth showed in something that wasn't a smile. "Tell him," he directed. "If you don't I will."

"He's . . . 'Dude' Duncan," Clara Montfort admitted finally.

The banker repeated the name dazedly. "The bandit?" he said. "The one who held up the bank in Monterey last week? The one who shot the cashier to death? The leader of the gang that escaped with sixty thousand dollars? The one the police are looking for?"

"Yes, yes!" Her voice was high-pitched, a sharp wail close to hysteria. "Charles, what do you want here? Until now I've been—you promised—"

He had promised her when he started on his career of crime that he'd never let anyone know that he was her brother, never bother her in any way. For he'd embarked on that career coolly, philosophically, not as an accident of environment, as most criminals do.

He'd had it all figured out. But he hadn't foreseen this.

"Forget that," he cut her off. "I've got to have money—clean money—quick. It's my only chance. I'm going to—"

No, he'd better not tell them he planned to skip the country. There was a place on Grant Avenue not three blocks from the Hall of Justice where he could buy a phony passport all fixed up nice for a hundred dollars.

"I'm going to hole up for a while back East but I can't use that Monterey stuff," he finished. "It's hot."

With the beard, he'd be a cinch as a scientist going to the Gobi. Besides, the dicks would never think of looking for a fugitive robber in so conspicuous a place as a Pacific Clipper plane. They had no imagination. That's why they'd never caught him. They knew how to deal with the screwy morons who comprised nearly all of the nation's trouble-makers but they couldn't cope with an educated strategist.

"I haven't much cash here," Montfort was saying. "About—"

"Who said you had?" Duncan interrupted. "Here's what you do. Get it straight. The time locks on your vaults downtown open at nine o'clock and it's after nine now. Telephone and say—"

"But—"

"Shut up! Say something important has come up here. A confidential visit by an important personage with whom you would like to make a deal, in cash, sort of off the record. Your firm must do things like that now and then. You can make it convincing."

"And if I don't?"

"YOU should know the answer to that. I'm sought on half a dozen murder counts already. One more won't make any difference. I'll shoot you to death here and now."

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"Do as he says, Roderick," gasped Clara Montfort. "He will—kill you. He isn't human! His mind is—warped."

"Yes?" said Duncan, patronizingly. "That's a question of opinion. I don't like the word 'warped.' Better say I'm not normal—not normally stupid. The dividing line between genius and insanity is often hard to recognize, and unfortunately you two can't see that my mind lies on the side of genius."

His words crackled: "Get busy, Montfort! Better tell them to send twenty grand. That ought to last me until the stick-up stuff cools."

Montfort gave him a peculiar look. The banker wet his lips and his eyes dropped again to the gun, to the tight trigger finger. He crossed to a phone and picked it up very slowly and gave a number.

The woman's breathing was audible in the room.

Duncan said: "It's a good thing you gave the right number, Montfort. If you hadn't—" Duncan hefted the gun significantly.

Everything was going to work out fine. He could feel it. With the twenty grand he'd be an explorer flying to Mongolia by afternoon. He'd stay there for a year or so until the heat blew over and then he'd come home for the fortune awaiting him. He felt a vast contempt for the rest of humanity.

"Hello, Cooper?" the banker was saying into the phone. "Montfort speaking. Yes, I know I'm late. I've been engaged in an important conference here at home. Something unexpected. Yes. Someone who didn't care to appear at the office."

His tone was steady, businesslike. "I want you to do me a favor. This deal calls for discretion, and I prefer to handle it personally, alone. I'll tell you about it later. Use a special messenger and send me twenty thousand in— Just a moment."

He spoke to Duncan. "How do you want it?"

"Twenties and fifties," said Duncan.

"Twenties and fifties," repeated Montfort, removing his hand from the mouthpiece. "Right away. I'll be waiting." He hung up. "Well?"

"I guess that was okay," said Duncan grudgingly. "Stay away from that table."

Seconds went by and the phone rang. Montfort started.

"No—I'll get it." Duncan went to the instrument and lifted it. "Yes?"

"Mr. Montfort, please," a voice requested.

"Who's calling?"

"The bank."

"Very well. Just a moment." Duncan put the phone down. "They're checking up, Montfort, as I expected." He grimaced sardonically. "Be careful."

Montfort took the phone. "Yes, Cooper, of course it was I! Hurry it along, will you?" He hung up again.

TWENTY grand! Duncan moved over towards the foyer. Easy and simple. Why hadn't he thought of it before? Probably he would have if it hadn't been for his foolish pride in keeping his word to his sister, showing her his philosophy was right. As if her opinion mattered.

The messenger would be armed but it'd be easy to take him. He could suspect nothing; certainly not an attack in the home of his employer.

Clara was pleading with him about something but he hardly listened. From where he stood he could see out

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a tall window, the panorama of San Francisco. Down there in all those buildings were a lot of nincompoops piddling about their pitiful jobs when all the riches of the world were within their reach and they had neither the initiative to grasp what they wanted nor the acumen to get away with it.

Perhaps they too had read Schopenhauer and perhaps they realized the truth in a vague, resentful way, but they were so infernally human that they couldn't be completely logical and do something about it. With childish tenacity they persisted in clinging to outworn ideas of morality and virtue and all the hokum that enters into the complexity of emotional procedure. Principles, and all that rot.

Clara was like them, in a way. But she was a woman and as such partially excusable. Women always fell for hokum more than men because their brains weren't capable of a coldly reasoning perspective. That was why they were such shoddy gamblers. There she was now blubbering and making an idiot of herself.

Montfort stood transfixed, stony-faced, waiting.

The buzzer sounded. Montfort said, "Well, what now?"

"Go to the door and let him in," Duncan told him. "I'll be covering you from this end of the foyer, from behind this portière. Walk in with him, well on the other side of him from me, and if you move when I let him have it as he comes by—you'll get it too; understand?"

"I understand," said Montfort gratingly.

He walked past Duncan to the door, his steps short, stiffly halting, like a man going to the gallows. Duncan could almost see the hackles rising on his neck.

Clara Montfort had fallen tensely silent.

DUNCAN switched the gun to his left hand and took out a blackjack with his right. He held both ready and peered through a crack between the curtain and the wall. There was something tight in his throat. Blood was rushing in his ears.

Montfort took hold of the knob and turned it carefully and opened the door. Globules of moisture stood out on the side of the banker's face.

"The currency you ordered, Mr. Montfort," said a man with a briefcase. He extended it.

"Yes, of course," said Montfort, jerkily casual. "Bring it in, will you?"

Suddenly it occurred to Duncan that he could have had Montfort receive the money at the door and the messenger could have gone on away. But it was too late to change the set-up now. Besides, the messenger might have observed something suspicious, might have wanted to come in for a receipt.

They were coming. Duncan's brain whirled feverishly, giddily. Frantically he sought to calm himself. He mustn't let himself get excited. Always his success as a criminal had hinged on cool, purposeful reasoning in emergencies; the killer without a nerve in his body. Something had gone haywire with his processes. It was the hangover, that was it; everything had seemed so cloudily strange all morning.

He held the gun close and raised the blackjack. The messenger came past. Power surged into Duncan's upraised arm. He started to swing the leather-covered ball of lead onto the man's skull.

"Stop!" shouted a man's voice behind him, and Clara Montfort screamed in a piercing crescendo.

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Duncan whirled with the rapidity of an uncoiling spring. He fired blindly. A bullet smashed him in the face, furrowing along his cheek. He tried to steady himself. He fired again at the man who had shot him, and missed. A second slug from the unexpected antagonist burned into his chest like a white-hot iron.

Something crashed against his head. The messenger beside him, going into action, had hit him with a gun-barrel. Duncan sagged to his knees, shrieking obscenely. The gun was kicked out of his hand.

Faces floated in a haze above him. Sickness dragged with clammy fingers at his stomach. Saliva, tinged with red, spilled from the corners of his mouth onto his beard. The faces in the eddying haze began to clear.

"It's 'Dude' Duncan, the bandit," Montfort was telling the others.

"That drunken bum?" the messenger said. "Why, he hasn't shaved for weeks."

"He—" Clara began.

"You must be quiet, dear," said Montfort. "Go to your room. We never saw him before. A complete stranger. He forced his way in here. Must have been insane. But he told us he was Duncan."

"Listen, you guys!" Duncan croaked. Weakly, desperately, he raised himself on an elbow. "You're all business men. You're out to make money. Well, I've got money and you can have it if you'll let me go. Sixty grand! I'll tell you where I've got it stashed away. I crossed the punks who were in on that Monterey heist with me, see, and I've got it all! What—"

"It wouldn't do you any good if we did let you go," said Montfort. "You're dying, Duncan. Cooper's second shot got you squarely in the chest."

"Cooper? The bank official you talked to on the phone?"

"Yes. You overlooked a fatal detail. Cooper knew it was impossible to get hold of that much cash and he knew that I knew it, so he came up with the messenger and came in through the kitchen. Only Cooper isn't an official; he's a watchman."

"A—watchman?" Duncan echoed. "Then the fatal detail—"

"Yes, Duncan," said Montfort. "To-day's Sunday."

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## UNSAFE SAFE-BREAKING

MANY a burglar has discovered, to his sorrow, that a safe place for the filings which drop from the safe which he has been working on is not in the fibers of his clothing. The modern scientific detectives have a habit of seizing just such tiny bits of evidence as that and using it to telling effect in securing the conviction of the criminal. Magnetic pieces of steel are passed over the suspected garment and small fragments of steel are thereby found, if present. These are subjected to a rigid chemical analysis to determine if they are the same as samples of filings taken from the safe. It is things like that which make the world an unsafe place for safe-breakers.

—*John Berry.*

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# Seven Faces

By Max Brand

"You're going to die, Campbell," Grosvenor grated. "And I'm going to watch your face"

*What has happened—*

JOHN COBB, an eccentric multimillionaire, vanished from the crack Chicago train, in spite of the fact that Detectives Patrick O'Rourke and Angus Campbell, of New York's homicide squad were trying to guard him.

O'Rourke, certain he can solve the mystery in his own way, leaves the train, goes back to Fullerton, where there had been a brief stop. A youngster named McGuire accompanies him. O'Rourke discovers Cobb's body, disfigured past recognition by burning gasoline. He finds in Cobb's bedroom seven strange photographic portraits, one that of Charles Latimer, a young man whom he had met on the train.

*Campbell and O'Rourke Winnow Truth from Falsehood in a Desperate Last-Minute Attempt to Solve the Mystery of the Seven Faces*

O'Rourke and McGuire also capture an elderly marauder named Pete, whose picture is also one of the seven. Pete manages to escape, with the aid of an accomplice called Champ. Returning to continue their fine-tooth-comb search of Cobb's place, they wound young McGuire. O'Rourke uncovers the treasure trove, a cryptic rough map.

State troopers recapture Pete and Champ, bring them back to O'Rourke. They outsmart him again, however, taking

This story began in *Detective Fiction Weekly* for October 17



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the map, and leave for Chicago in an express passenger airplane. There they would have been trapped by Chicago police, working under orders from New York, had not the radio exposed the plot and forewarned them. They force the pilot to land at a distance from the Midwestern metropolis. O'Rourke, still on their trail, follows on to Chicago in another speedy plane.

In the meanwhile Campbell is convinced that the heart of the mystery is on the train. His clues lead him to believe that Charles Latimer, a beautiful girl, Josephine Worth, and a bearded, foreign-looking chap named Grosvenor were all in Cobb's stateroom before the disappearance. In Buffalo, Josephine, trailed by both Latimer and Campbell, meets a friend. Latimer gains possession of an old newspaper, the *Willoughby Messenger*.

Campbell steals the paper, a bit later, reads a long article about a bonanza strike made by seven partners: Winslow, Champion, Worth, Latimer, Waterson, Markham and Glenn. It all seems to tie together. A certain difference in Cobb's signature and the body of the will he had made O'Rourke and Campbell witness is worrying the Scotch detective when the train arrives in Chicago.

O'Rourke is waiting at the station for Campbell, and they separate again, O'Rourke to follow Latimer and Campbell to tail Grosvenor.

At the Hotel Clifdon, where Grosvenor meets Lawrence Purvis Pelton, Cobb's sole heir, Campbell makes a pact with a house detective named Burman. Together they give Grosvenor a mild third degree, frighten him badly. And he shakes the watcher set on his trail and vanishes on some mysterious errand.

In the meanwhile, Latimer, after doubling his tracks like a hare, unaware that O'Rourke is still following him, goes to his father's former Chicago home. Pete and Champion are there. Latimer forces them to give him the map they hijacked from O'Rourke. Josephine Worth appears, has a very bitter quarrel with Latimer, who is most unreasonable with her. He forces her to leave, and she merely circles the block, scales a few fences and makes her way to the rear of the house again determined to make another entrance.

## CHAPTER XXX

### Invasion

WHEN Campbell found that Aloysius Grosvenor had escaped from him, he endured the pain of that disappointment for a long moment. Then, rousing himself, he rose from his chair.

Burman said: "Maybe that feather blew farther off than you expected?"

"I'm just a poor, old damned fool," said Campbell quietly, and walked from the office.

He went to the mail-desk first, and found at last a small envelope addressed to him, unsealed, and with the telephone message written down:

"Mr. Patrick telephoned to ask you to meet him at the corner of Beauregard and Narcissus Streets."

He smiled faintly at the slight alias under which O'Rourke had chosen to disguise himself. He tossed the note into a waste paper basket, thought better of that, reclaimed it, and tore it to shreds. Then he went out to the entrance of the hotel.

He said to a doorman: "Have you seen a man go out—big, swaggering, eyebrows held away up high? Looks as though something was surprising him?"

"Not seen him, sir," the doorman returned.

"Seen a thin, small fellow with a white bit of tape across his upper lip?" asked Campbell.

"Not seen him. Sorry, sir," said the doorman.

"Where's Beauregard and Narcissus?"

"That's a colored residence section now, sir."

Campbell got a cab and started. The night was growing much colder. The speed of the car sent the air whistling



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through cracks about the windows; and yet the air within remained stale and the draughts seemed like cold, dead fingers laid upon his flesh.

He would take up buttermilk and wholewheat bread He would have oatmeal for cereal every morning. He would heap the cereal with cream, and gradually put some fat upon this wasted body of his. At the thought of cream, his belly crawled in him. But a man must have more flesh when he grows old. It robes one with greater dignity. That was why O'Rourke, no doubt, captured the greater number of headlines in the newspapers. He had the front of an important fellow.

Halfway to the place of the appointment Campbell remembered an important thing left undone. He stopped at the first saloon and from the telephone booth rang New York. The police call went swiftly through; Corrigan's familiar, snarling voice came over the wire.

"What's the word about the killing?" asked Campbell.

"I'm expectig that from you!" snapped Corrigan. "Where are those two devils? Where are you?"

"Chicago. I'm on a different trail. The killing I'm talking about is back there in 1903. Peter Winslow. Who did Peter Winslow kill?"

"I've got it here," replied Corrigan. After a moment he said: "It was a man named Jay Markham. . . . I've got the whole case written up here. Want any of it?"

"All the main points."

"It wasn't a saloon fight. That's why the sentence was so long. They didn't think much of a gunfight out there in Willoughby, it looks like. Not so long as it was flavored with whiskey. But this one was out in the open. There were seven partners . . ."

"Worth, Latimer, Winslow, and the rest?"

"That's right. Markham was one of them. Jay Markham. All those seven people threw in together. Markham and Winslow went out prospecting together. Only Winslow came back. A rumor went around that he'd found a wonderfully rich vein. It was a whisper that went through the town. No assay report was published, of course. But the story started going. When Markham was found dead, people thought that Winslow had killed him so as to keep the strike secret and work it for himself, later on. That was why Winslow got sent to the pen for life."

"How did Winslow get out?"

"Pardoned," said Corrigan.

"Governor pardoned him?"

"Yes."

"For what? New evidence about the old shooting scrape?"

"That governor maybe could have been bought off," said Corrigan. "The story in the inside circle out there is that John Cobb got to the governor and bought off Winslow."

"Cobb bought him off?" shouted Campbell, his brain ringing with excitement.

"That makes a good circle, don't it?" said Corrigan.

"Good? It's beautiful!" cried Campbell. "Anything else?"

"Nothing very important. I'll read the whole report to you, if you want."

"That's enough," said Campbell. "I can go on that, I guess. There's no mention of a Grosvenor in the yarn, anywhere?"

"No."

"Nor of a Gresham?"

"Not a word."

"It's damn funny—but let it go. I'll carry on. Corrigan, we're not quite



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in the dark. We've got a little light to go by."

"Good, Angus!" said the inspector. "The papers are carrying this big; they're making it big-time stuff. Fifteen millions; burned alive in an iron chair; airplanes forced down and all that—the whole town is full of it. Angus, if you two make anything of this, you'll get into department history!"

When Campbell had rung off and returned to his cab, he was sitting erect on the edge of his seat, shuddering with excitement. The tremor remained in him when the cab stopped on the corner of Beauregard and Narcissus. He paid it off and watched the red tail-light bob out of view around the next corner. Then he lingered for a moment near a street light, letting his loitering be explained by a very deliberate igniting of a cigarette.

IT seemed to Campbell, as he waited there, that a shadow slipped out of view near a house front farther up the street, but he was by no means sure of this. The match flame had cast such a dazzle into his eyes.

"This way, Angus!" O'Rourke's voice called from the black darkness.

He stepped back into the shadow beside a low porch; he could spot the familiar fumes of an O'Rourke cigar before he could make out the man. A moment later he was peering under the steps, through the arch in front of the cellar door. There was the glow of the cigar butt.

"News?" said Campbell.

"Yes. News. Gimme yours."

"Grosvenor got five thousand dollars from Lawrence Purvis Pelton."

"He did? Then it's Grosvenor and Pete and Champion!" exclaimed O'Rourke.

"*And* a gold mine, *and* Cobb's millions, and Pelton paying for the murder. It's big, Pat!"

"Don't let it get to your head," said O'Rourke.

"To *my* head?" answered Campbell angrily.

"I was scared of it from the first," said O'Rourke. "Fifteen millions is a lot for one Scotch head to keep thinking about. But let that go . . ."

"I'm damned if I let it go!" said Campbell. "If an Irish bog jumper—"

"Will you shut up and listen? I trailed Latimer. He ducked and twisted and doubled like a fox, but I followed him. By car; and then on foot. I ran till I was blind, but I spotted the house he went into."

"Where?"

"Up there across the street. I've been watching it ever since except for stepping into a saloon around the corner and telephoning to the Clifdon. Number 2118. That's where Latimer went!"

"What's in the house?"

"It's empty, far as I can make out. There's a For Sale sign on it. Empty of furniture, I mean. I took a squint through one of the cellar windows and slid a ray of light inside. Empty of furniture, but not of people. Latimer's still in there. But Miss Josephine Worth isn't."

"Has she been around?"

"I saw her come out and down the street. I spotted her when she went under that street light yonder. . . . Where's Grosvenor?"

"I let him have the money back," explained Campbell. "He's as guilty as hell, but he's not the only one. I figured that if I turned him loose he'd lead me to something big. Besides, what have we got on him except money from Pelton? Pelton was hiding behind the name of Purvis. He and Gros-

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venor are not friends. They hate each other. . . . I thought I might scoop in Grosvenor and Purvis and the whole gang if we held back a little. They'll certainly get in touch with Pete and Champion. But the fool of a detective in the hotel let Grosvenor get away. He slipped."

"What about the Scotch fool that left the shadowing to a hotel dick?" exclaimed O'Rourke.

"How was I to know that the jackass couldn't do his work? . . . There was a crowd . . ."

"I don't give a hang about the explanations. Grosvenor's gone, is he?"

"And he's guilty as hell. He sweated green when I told him that we can send accessories before the fact of murder to the chair."

"It's Grosvenor, is it?" muttered O'Rourke. "I hoped that we could get something bigger than that fathead on the hook."

"We will," agreed Campbell. "You have Latimer spotted. The whole gang will show up together—perhaps in that same house. Is there a back entrance?"

"I don't know. I suppose so. Anyway, the girl used the front cellar door. Why wouldn't Latimer use it, then?"

"Because he's different from other people," said Campbell. "I've seen some of the things that he's done, and he's different. There's news from Nevada. I just got it. Winslow went up for life for shooting one of his six partners. Jay Markham. Something about a rich mining strike. John Cobb bought Winslow out of jail. Bribery of the governor, or somethig like that, the people on the inside say. Do you begin to get the picture?"

"I get it. I get it!" said O'Rourke. He puffed his cigar so excitedly that the smacking of his lips was audible. Campbell shuddered with disgust.

"Can't you smoke except you make a sound like a pig eating apples?" he asked.

"Shut up and be still," said O'Rourke. "I'm thinking about that back way into the house. It's gotta be covered."

"It ought to be," said Campbell.

"If Latimer's in there, we ought to be in there, too," said O'Rourke.

"We should," agreed Campbell. "And I wish there was more of us."

"I never seen you show fear of any man, Angus. What's the matter with you?" asked O'Rourke.

"Latimer. He's different. He'd strangle the two of us like that, Pat."

"Maybe. Maybe!" said O'Rourke, who had an Irishman's dislike of being considered inferior to anyone in the world.

"It'll be splitting up, if one of us goes around behind," said Campbell.

"We've got to do it," said O'Rourke. "Wait five minutes for me. I'm going around behind the block and try to come in through the back yards. You try to get in from the front. Will you do that, Angus?"

"Ay, will I?" said Campbell. "And if that devil Latimer comes in sight of you, don't stop to question. Shoot, Pat!"

"I will," said O'Rourke, and left instantly to perform his part of the task.

Campbell, however, waited for a moment, as had been agreed. Besides, he wanted to rouse himself, for he was one of those cold-blooded men who increase their fervor by gradual degrees and have a high flashpoint.

He crossed the street, therefore, after some four or five minutes had elapsed. The door was locked, but a window gave readily to his hand, and he wriggled over into the darkness. That win-

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dow made a clumsy point of retreat, however, so he found the door again and turned the key. He even pulled the door a little ajar before he turned again and started down the hall.

There were only windy whispers in that big house; the occasional rays from his pocket light as he switched it on and off, startled him when they fell on the emptiness ahead. It was not a sound that he heard then, but a mere shadow over his mind like the flick of a bat's wing. He stiffened, turning his torch on to fall blaze, and he looked over his shoulder in time to see, dimly, the contorted face of Aloysius Grosvenor rushing upon him.

## CHAPTER XXXI

### Murder in the House

THE height and weight of Grosvenor overwhelmed Campbell at the first impact and hurled him on his face with his arms spread out flat on the floor. The bulk above him crushed the wind from his narrow lungs.

The flashlight, clattering against the floor, went out.

Then there was the thick, dark silence, with Grosvenor breathing hard and making a queer, moaning sound of content.

The big, gasping whisper said: "By God, Campbell, there's going to be one less bright detective in the world. You hear me?"

"I hear," said Campbell.

For it was best to talk, he knew. Silence will make the devil in a man leap on tiptoe.

"How is it now, Campbell? Who's sweating now?"

"I'm the one that sweats now, Grosvenor," he admitted.

Grosvenor drew in such a breath that it whistled through his teeth with a sound as though he were sucking up water.

"I've got the gun ready, Campbell," he said. "You hear it tap on the floor?"

"I hear it," agreed Campbell.

"You're going to die, Campbell. And I'm going to watch your face."

He took out a torch, snapped on the switch, and laid it on the floor. The light flared into Campbell's eyes.

"What a wizened mug you've got!" said Grosvenor. "How much hell have you pried your way into, anyway? How many poor devils have you done in? You've done the last of 'em, Campbell. I've got your head on the anvil, and here it goes smash. I pull up your coat over your head, so that the blood and brains won't spatter me, and nothing touches the butt of the gun. I arrange it like this, with the flap back so that I can still see your face. Are you afraid, you Scotch bloodsucker?".

"There's no fear of you in me!" Campbell cried. "A man can't fear a rat, no matter how big it's bloated."

"Ah?" said Grosvenor. "Then take this, damn you!"

O'ROURKE, working his way from the back of the block, followed very much the same course that Josephine Worth had discovered, except that his fat body did not permit him to climb the fences with her athletic ease. And as he rolled over the top of them on his thick stomach, he gasped and cursed his luck.

The back yards, fortunately, were empty, so that he had little to stumble over, for the only light that reached him was the small, broken rays from the rear of the houses on the farther

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street. So he came behind his goal and tried the cellar windows, one by one. They were all fast. He was so panting and impatient that he swore never again to go on strange missions without carrying with him that comfort of burglars—a diamond point with which to cut the glass of windowpanes. Backing up, he scanned the rear of the house more thoroughly. There was a drain pipe from the eaves which ran down the wall, and a lighter body and a stronger grip than his own might have climbed it. However, even if he were to climb above, perhaps all the windows would be found securely locked.

Reluctantly, he gave up the rear as a means of ingress, though he was forced to admit that it remained perfectly simple for an active man to open any of those windows and descend. In his youth, he told himself, he would not have submitted so easily. But now, with a mournful shake of the head, he turned to the right and followed the narrow concrete path which girdled the house and separated it from the sheer wall of its neighbor.

From the inside, he heard nothing, but Campbell must be in there by this time. He thought of Angus Campbell burrowing like a mole through the thick darkness, and the picture in his mind of that withered, stealthy, active body was very pleasant to O'Rourke. He turned the corner of the building into the sunken walk, beneath the street level, that passed the front cellar door. That was when a whisper of sound, a slight grating of running feet came past him, straight out the door. O'Rourke reached with one hand for the shoulder of the small man who broke out from the cellar. With the other hand he drew his gun.

Such was the impetus of that contact that he was dragged, half stumbling, out onto the pavement. There his struggling victim fell, face up, and he looked down at the narrow, dark features of a small man who had a white streak of tape across the upper lip.

The headlight of a passing car at the same moment flashed from the dimmers to full power. It swerved to the curb with a soft, silent rush.

"Up!" said O'Rourke. "Who are you and where are you from?"

The slender fellow scrambled to his feet, with O'Rourke's hand assisting him by gripping hard to the scruff of the neck.

He put his hands to his face and groaned: "In there! He's dead! He's dead! It's murder!"

Out of that car at the curb a stream of four burly policemen advanced on rubber-padded heels towards O'Rourke. They spilled out suddenly around the pair.

"What sort of dirt are you tryin' to kick up here?" asked one of them.

"I'm First Grade Detective O'Rourke," he answered, "from New York."

"I'm Alexander the Great from Omaha," said one of the cops, laughing. "What sort of cheese are you tryin' to feed us, brother?"

"You cross-eyed jackass," roared O'Rourke, "if you don't believe your ears, will you believe your eyes? Here's a man that's talking murder. Hold him, a couple of you. Let me see—"

He started down the steps from the street level. Two of the police collared him at once.

"Oh, that's an old gag, friend," said one of them. "You'll come along with us, First Grade Detective O'Rourke from Omaha!"

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"Here," said O'Rourke, patiently, though he was going mad. "There's a light showing inside. Will you go straight on and arrest every man that you find in the house? Arrest me too, for the fools you are, if you think you have to."

"He means something," said one of them. "Let's go on with him, Jack."

So they went with O'Rourke through the gaping door of the cellar and saw before them as ugly a sight as ever a man witnessed. Jack had snapped on a powerful flashlight as they came to the dinginess of the cellar, and it was into the cone of this that Campbell walked, with his blind hands extended before him, and his face streaming blood.

O'Rourke was freed of the two hands that held him in an instant. He ran to Campbell and caught him by the shoulders.

"Angus, man!" he said. "Have they murdered you, lad? Have they done you in? Oh, the devils. I'll have 'em burned by inches!"

"Gimme a handkerchief to wipe my eyes," snapped Campbell angrily. "Who talks about me being murdered? I'm only choked and blinded in the blood of a swine! There he lies back there — Grosvenor. He's burning in hell already, because it would only take him one step from death to get right there."

He mopped the red from his face quite calmly and led the way back into the narrows of the hall.

THERE lay Grosvenor, face down, with the hilt of a knife sticking out of his back, and a handkerchief wrapped around it. The turn of his head showed his face with the lips still furled back from his teeth as though he were trying to sink his teeth into the floor; and in contrast with that fury was the glazed content of the half-opened eye.

One of the police, dropping to a knee, slipped a hand under the body to feel the heart.

"He's done," he said. "And a kind of a damned pretty murder this one makes, too. What I mean, the crook leaves his handkerchief to help us find him. That's kind of nice of him, sergeant, eh?"

"Nice be damned," said the sergeant. "I'd rather have the fingerprints than all the handkerchiefs in the world. Who's this man? Who knows about it?"

"Will you pipe down?" said O'Rourke, "Or do you wanta raise the house?"

"The house is empty," said the sergeant, looking about him.

"The house ain't empty," O'Rourke contradicted.

"What's in it, then?" demanded the sergeant.

"Murder down here—and murder upstairs, I guess," said O'Rourke.

He pushed his identifying badge under the nose of the sergeant. "What happened, Angus?" he demanded solicitously.

"I come here—I feel a wind come up behind me—it's Grosvenor that whams me down on the floor and lies all over me, and turns on his light that's still shining in his face, so's he could see the look of my face when he mashed my brains out. I think he's ready to hit, and then the weight of him spills out loose and warm as blubber all over me. I don't try to do a thing, for a minute. Then I start wriggling. I get out from under, and see him the way you see him. It was the spilling of the damned pig's blood in my face that started me squirming."

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"You saw nothing?" asked the sergeant. "When that man collapsed on top of you. . . ."

"Will you keep your voice down, sergeant dear?" asked O'Rourke, "or do you want every murdering devil in the house to know that the law is on their heels?"

He grinned with fury at the sergeant, who scowled and tucked his face down deeper between his walrus jowls.

"How could I see anything?" said Campbell, "I was lyin' on the floor, face down, waiting for murder. "All I know is that the men spilled out all loose over me, and then I thought I heard feet whispering along the floor, light as a girl running, and then a door closed somewhere, I thought."

The sergeant was only half listening to this tale, for he was picking up the handkerchief that was wrapped around the handle of the knife.

"A. G." said the sergeant. "It's got A. G. stitched into the corner. Find an A. G. and you've got the man that did this killing."

"His name is Aloysius Grosvenor, the man that's lying there," said O'Rourke, "and that proves that he reached around and stabbed himself in the back. But he didn't want to leave the fingermarks; or maybe he didn't want any of the dirty blood on his hands. So he wrapped the knife up before he stabbed. How's that for a theory, Angus?"

"It's a damn good theory," said Campbell. "I never heard a better one. But bless the person that slid that knife into the back of murdering Aloysius Grosvenor. D'you see the arch of his eyebrows, Angus? He's still surprised at what he's seeing in hell."

"Everybody pipe down," said O'Rourke. "There's one more man at least in the house, but we'll see what little Mr. Pelton can tell us about all this."

## CHAPTER XXXII

### More Game

MR. PELTON had taken command of himself again with a deal of rapidity. He was brushing from his clothes assiduously the dust of the sidewalk where he had fallen when O'Rourke's bulldog grip was upon him.

He was neatly turned out in a blue suit and black shoes and a blue tie spotted with fine points of gold; a blue-trimmed handkerchief peeped appropriately from the breast pocket of his coat. The police no longer kept their hands on him, and he had fallen into an attitude of easy grace such as the well-dressed are apt to adopt, seeming to fit themselves better to their clothes with very move that they make.

"Now break right out and tell us what happened," demanded O'Rourke.

"I'll search the top of the house with my men," said the sergeant. "You two can take care of this fellow, I guess?"

"You'll stay down here with us, if you don't mind," suggested Campbell. "When we start to search the upstairs of this place, we'll go two by two and try to act like mice. We don't want to go rolling through the place like a herd of bulls, sergeant, if you don't mind."

"By the way of them talking," said the sergeant, who was a good natured man after all, "you'd think that we had no brains at all here in Chicago. . . But go on, man, and get to the meat of the thing."

"It will have to come out in a court of law, I know," said Pelton. "I'd rather keep it for that time, Mr. O'Rourke, if you don't mind."

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"I don't mind at all," said O'Rourke. "But if a man's caught with the blood practically dripping off his hands, mostly it's a good idea for him to tell the folks how innocent he is on the spot. Afterwards, it sounds like the lawyer might of given some advice."

"I think you're right," Pelton agreed with extraordinary coolness. He touched the tape on his upper lip and frowned a little, as though the lip pained him when he spoke; then he went on: "The fact is that Grosvenor is a blackmailer."

"So you followed him up and slipped a knife into him?" nodded O'Rourke, pleasantly.

Pelton listened to the interruption with perfect calm, and when it was ended he went on.

"There's a matter of a woman in the business, and I'll leave her name out until the court wants it from me. Is that all right?" he asked.

"It's all right," said O'Rourke. "Ten years after they set the whole world on fire, there's mighty few women that're worth remembering the names of. Go ahead."

"Leave the man talk and stop chattering, Pat," advised Campbell.

Pelton smiled faint thanks towards the Scotchman. He continued: "I happened to meet Grosvenor here in Chicago. That is to say, I ran into him on the street. He cornered me at once. The man was broke, he was desperately ugly, he wanted money or else he threatened to talk about that rotten spot in my past. I'm hoping to be married to a charming girl before long, Mr. O'Rourke, and the sort of filth that Grosvenor would have built up with lies out of a very ordinary peccadillo would have smashed everything. I went out and got the money for Mr. Grosvenor, therefore. I paid him five thousand dollars."

"Correct," said O'Rourke.

"But I wasn't content with that," continued Pelton. "The fact is that the fear of blackmail was chilling my soul. I wondered what could be done about such a beast as Grosvenor. So I thought it might be a possibility for me to call in the police and have them watch him. He's a fellow with an unsavory reputation. If he were pointed out, I thought that the law might do something constructive to put him under cover."

"That's a reasonable kind of an idea," said the sergeant.

"The fact is that I followed him," said Pelton, "when he left the Clifdon. And before long I saw that *he* was following another man. That man was you, Mr. Campbell."

"Was it?" said Campbell. "Couldn't you have hooted a warning to me, then?"

"When you went down the block and disappeared into the dark for a time," said Pelton, paying no heed to the interruption, "Grosvenor hid also, and I got down beside a flight of front steps. I saw you cross the street and enter this house. I saw Grosvenor steal in immediately after you. By that time, frankly, I was very curious. I wondered what a detective and such a fellow as Grosvenor would want to do with one another—"

"How did you know that I was Campbell?"

"Grosvenor had told me a little about you. I tiptoed into the cellar, here. I was a bit on edge and frightened. I got into the mouth of the hallway. I thought I heard somebody running lightly—on tiptoes, so to speak. Then a door closed. Whether on this floor or upstairs I couldn't say.

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But just as I entered the mouth of that corridor, where the light was very dim, I saw the dead man stretched on the floor. That was too much for me. I turned and ran for my life. You know the rest of this, Mr. Campbell."

"You ran very light on your feet for a fellow that was scared to death," O'Rourke commented.

"I suppose I did," said the calm Pelton. "When you've seen murder, I suppose it puts wings in the heels of most of us. It's the first time that I've seen death—like that!"

He closed his eyes and shuddered. It was only a single spasm.

"You've told the whole truth about this?" asked Campbell.

PELTON looked straight at him.

"No," he said at last. "I've left out one part that makes things a good deal blacker for me. The fact is that Grosvenor had written me a threatening letter and commanded me to meet him with money in Chicago. I was weak enough to telegraph to his train that I would be in Chicago with money for him. No, it was not a chance meeting in the street."

He drew a long breath and dusted his slender fingers together.

"Well, I'm glad that I've told the whole story out," he said.

"It sounds straight," said O'Rourke. "You've got kind of the black look of that John Cobb about you, but, aside from that, I guess you're a straight fellow, Pelton."

Pelton accepted the compliment with the faintest of smiles.

"We'll just keep a good watch on him, though," said Campbell.

"I expect that, of course," said Pelton.

"There's no reason to expect it," answered O'Rourke, "but the way of it is that Angus is a Scotchman, and he wouldn't leave a penny of advantage out of his hand."

"It's very natural and very right," said Pelton. "I hope that I can be bailed out soon, however. I am bound for the funeral of my closest relative, Mr. Campbell."

"Did you like him?" asked Campbell, curiously. "Was he a fellow that meant a lot to you outside of hard cash?"

Pelton looked down. The eye of Campbell burned at him.

"He was very close," said Pelton, in a soft voice.

"Well . . ." said the sergeant.

But at this moment they heard, distinctly, a murmuring of feet along the floor above them. The sounds moved towards the back of the house.

"They may be coming down . . . there's more than Latimer," muttered O'Rourke. "Sergeant . . . Harry . . . all of you, get back inside the doors of these rooms along the hall . . . Heave Grosvenor out of the way. Out every light. When I signal you, maybe we'll have something to see."

Campbell merely said: "My job is you, Pelton. Stay close to me. I'll have a gun at the small of your back. No monkeyshines, Pelton."

"My dear fellow," said Pelton, "do you suspect me as much as all this?"

"I dunno," said Campbell. "I might have to see you burn in the chair after all. There's just the chance, and I'm a frugal man, Pelton. I don't waste the chances when I find them!"

"Right you are!" said Pelton.

O'Rourke's whispering instructions had set the police at work, and their rubber-heeled shoes made little noise on the floor as they lifted the body of Grosvenor, his long arms dripping down as they carried him into the

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nearest room. All in a trice, that narrow little corridor was empty except for some glistening spots of blood which lay where Grosvenor had died.

The last flashlight had gone out before O'Rourke heard the sound of a door opening distinctly, above them and at the back of the cellar. At the same time, a thin whistling of wind ran through the rooms.

After that, quiet footfalls descended. Someone stumbled and cursed under breath. Then the wavering brilliance of a torchlight went flaming down the cellar corridor. An automobile went by in the street and honked like a wild goose at the next corner.

The voice of a man muttered something.

"Now!" said O'Rourke, quite loudly, and shone the torch from his hand straight towards the people in the corridor.

It was Pete he saw first, and half a step behind him chunky Champion, already with a gun half out of his clothes.

O'Rourke said: "Don't run, boys."

The police torches were flashing before this. They sidestepped through the doorways, their guns ready, a grim lot. For it takes a grim fellow to do Chicago police work. Grimness is in their legend, one might say.

"We won't run," said Pete with his usual coolness. "Hello, Mr. O'Rourke. It's off again, on again, Finnegan, ain't it, between you and me?"

"You're on again, Pete," said O'Rourke. "And you're going to stay on till you burn. Boys, get some handcuffs on these two thugs, will you? Iron 'em each separate, and then once together, and one of you for an anchor, eh?"

"They look a kind of harmless old pair," said the sergeant.

"Do they?" answered O'Rourke. "I'll tell you what they are—they're the heat that comes out of the flame, and the bang that comes out of the lightning, and the blood that follows a knife. There's nobody like 'em. You have 'em in your hands one minute, and then they're gone. They've made a fool of me; but now I'll make a choppin' block out of *them!*"

"Speak soft," said Campbell. "You are letting your voice out, Pat, and there's still Latimer over our heads. You still got a pair of handcuffs, brother? I can use it on this fellow here—this Gentleman Jim Pelton."

"Handcuffs?" murmured Pelton, and then he laughed a little, and made the laughter stop as though he were a little ashamed of being amused by such grave men.

"Now back for the stairs," said O'Rourke. "Every man with feathers between his toes. Mind the steps don't creak when you're climbing, and we'll gather Latimer in, bless him, and have the crowd of them cooped, except the girl."

He already had started for the back stairs when the voice of Champion rolled in a tremendous thunder through the cellar:

"Charlie! Police! Charlie!"

## CHAPTER XXXIII

### Getaway

THE thick and booming uproar of Champion's voice came loudly enough, but all the syllables obscure through the floor to big Latimer. Yet he made the meaning clearly enough and the warning lifted him as with wings out of his chair and into the hall of the first floor. At the same time, a thunder of footfalls fell upon the back stairs.

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He leaped for the front door. The grim outline of the police car standing at the curb waited for him there. He could, in fact, have flung the door open and raced safely down the front way, but he could not know that. So he turned and sprinted for the stairs with a graceful dignity from the first floor to the upper regions of the house, the great well diminishing as the stairway circled twice around, above. Three at a time he took the steps and reached the second floor as the uproar poured into the hallway beneath.

Outside the house a siren began a sound, and his heart floated up into his throat, buoyed by the shrilling cry.

He turned onto the last flight of the circling stairs. It was then that he heard the brief rattling of footfalls, quick, leaping footfalls, above him.

He went on, with a gun in his hand, one eye measuring the treads and one scanning the darkness which his flashlight probed. He had a glimpse of a figure well above, as he gained the top hallway, a form vanishing through the door that led to the unlighted attic stairs.

He gained that door. It was his only chance. If that scout closed the door to the roof, he was hopelessly and helplessly imprisoned in the house. The mere dropping of the latch would see to that. Only the dry, sharp vision of Campbell could have thought of getting some soft-footed forerunner into the upper part of the house to cut off all escape, thought Latimer.

He reached the narrows of the attic stairs. The torch showed him the closed door and hopelessly he beat his fists against it.

It jerked open instantly before him, and let hiim out under the stars. For the night had turned clear, bitterly cold and bright as a face. Automatically he dropped the outer bolt which was used in stormy weather. There was a way of prying it up from the inside, but the way took whole minutes.

Now, crouching with his gun, he scanned the sharp slant of the roof and the blunt fists of the chimney pots. Off to the right a form stood, clearly seen against the stippling of the stars. It was no man, but a woman! And she stood on the very verge of the gutter, balancing for the long leap to the next roof's edge.

"Not there!" he called.

He knew her by something indefinably light and graceful. "Jo, not there! It's too far for you—the other side—"

The pursuit boiled up right against the attic upper door and smashed at it with gun-butts.

And still that siren screamed through the street; and other answering sirens shrilled far off and nearer. The whole armed strength of the city might be pooled there before long!

The girl had turned and made a single pace back up the slant of the roof. He himself hardly dared to stand, but scrambled on all fours to the ridge. She, however, ran lightly up after him. She stood there again, secure as a tightrope walker, while the wind set her teetering.

"Charles, go on . . . I'll care for myself."

He thought he heard her say that, but the damned wind was blowing a numbness through his brain and dimming his eyes and putting a weird voice at his ear. Down the opposite, sharp slope of the roof he clambered, tearing off his shoes on the way. He stood at the verge, hooking his toes over the roof edge. It was not a very easy jump for one standing in such a precarious position. Then a light

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body ran past him, dark above and pale below . . . the girl with her skirts knotted at the waist, wonderfully small in her stockinged feet. Jumping from the run, she cleared the gap lightly before him. He, swinging his arms forward and up with all his might, sprang in turn, balanced horribly on the farther edge, and felt the strong tug of her hand drawing him forward to safety.

A splintering crash from the roof of the old Latimer house . . . that was the roof door going down under the gun-butts.

Well, let clodhopper policemen try to bridge the gap that he and the girl had flown over!

They went swiftly up to the ridge and scrambled over on the other side, Latimer on his hands and knees, and the easy form of the girl running upright as though a misstep would not have hurled her down to the concreted pavement below.

He found what he remembered out of his boyhood when he and the other youngsters in their daredevil period had played all over the roofs and knew them inch by inch, like good Alpine climbers. The door opening into this roof was a flimsy thing, as he recalled it; so flimsy it turned out to be now, in fact, that a single thrust of his shoulder cracked it from top to bottom, and the light from his torch gleamed down the dusty, steep steps beneath.

He was halfway down them when he turned and looked back at the girl. Her knee was at his shoulder. She was leaning out over him, holding to the side rail with one hand, and as the torchlight beat up into her face she laughed down at Latimer and waved her free hand. Her hair was so tousled that it seemed as though the wind were still blowing through it.

LATIMER glanced the flashlight back to the door before him. It was not locked, and opened at once upon the uppermost level of the house. Here, also, was the descending well of the stairs.

Grasping the bannister, he leaned against it for a moment to take wind and thought.

"The front way, Charles," said the girl. "They're watching the backs of the houses too closely. See!"

She stood at the head of the stairs, pointing, and across the big window at the end of the hall he could see the flashlights streaming, crossing and recrossing, as the men posted in the back yards of the houses scanned every inch with their torches.

She was right, of course. And there would be no breaking out from the rear. But the front?

Even now a new siren was screeching down the street before the house!

Their feet thudded rapidly down the three flights of the circling stairs to the first floor. And fast as Latimer ran, she was before him at the long, narrow window that looked from the door's side down the front steps.

He stood behind her. Light came in through the window from a random headlight; he saw his breath blowing on her hair. She was so much smaller than he had thought. Her head was hardly higher than his chin. If it had leaned back, it would have pressed against the curve of his throat. And yet she was . . .

"Listen to me," said Latimer. "Are you hearing me?"

She turned her head and looked silently up to him.

"I'm going to open the front door. Then I intend to walk down it side by side with you, slowly. You understand? Get your dress down. Slowness

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is what does the work, here, not speed. Slowly down those steps, as though we didn't care. People see what they expect to see. Fugitives ought to be running at full speed. You understand, Jo?"

"I'll do it," she said, shaking out her skirt to full length again.

"If they look at our feet, we're gone," explained Latimer. "Otherwise—why, we're simply curious fools from the neighborhood come to see the fun. That's all. You see that car back there? There's no one in that. I'm going to get into it and try to bolt down the street. But while I'm raising a commotion, you'll be covered by what I'm doing. Just walk calmly on down the block. . . . Have you got money?"

"I have," she said, her head still turned, staring up at him.

"Take a taxi. Get down in the old second-hand district where you'll find places open all night. Change taxis a couple of times on the way. Rig yourself up with a coat and shoes. You hear me?"

"I hear you."

"So long, Jo. You're as game a little crook as ever lived," said Latimer. "I'd tell you to get out of this life you're in, but I know you like it. Goodbye. We won't have time for that when we get out there!"

She bowed her head.

"Ah!" muttered Latimer in her ear. "Do you have to keep up the acting even now? Isn't there an ounce of clean decency in you?"

She lifted her face. She grew taller at the same moment, so that he knew she had risen on her toes.

"Will you listen to me?" she asked.

"You don't have to build me up," said Latimer. "I'll do my best for you the way it is."

He started to draw back, but she caught the edge of his coat—as though her hand could stop him.

"I don't want to build you up. I want to tell you the truth," said the girl.

Latimer took her face between his hands. "Why, if there were truth in you," he said, "you'd be worth ten men's living and dying."

"You won't listen?" she pleaded.

He closed his eyes. The small, sweet music of her voice was entering deep into him. But he answered: "No, I won't listen."

He turned from her, opened the front door, and stepped outside it. She, instantly, was beside him. And they walked down the steps without haste.

AS they reached the sidewalk, a huge cop rushed at them, grabbed them each by a shoulder and shook them violently. The head of Jo flopped back and forth under this punishment.

"You damn young fools!" he was shouting. "Don't you know that we got a murderer trapped right next door?"

"We thought we'd take a look at the fun," said Josephine Worth.

"Get the hell out of here!" he shouted, and shooed them down the street.

Just to the side, hardly ten steps away, stood O'Rourke himself, brightly watchful. He saw the officer shooing away the pair—and O'Rourke looked the other way.

So, when Latimer reached the car which he had selected, he stepped into it. The girl walked past, out of sight beyond the shoulder of the car.

She was gone. Here, in an instant, she was snatched away from him to an eternity of time and space. He felt a little breathless. And with each draught of air he whiffed a delicate

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nothing of fragrance. That was her perfume. It seemed to take the cold out of the hard autumn night. It brought back a warm, sweet gust of spring.

The car was not locked. He turned the self-starter. The engine hummed, turned over.

A policeman ran at him from across the street.

"Hey, what's that?" he called. "Stop that! Get out of that car!"

"O'Rourke! Detective O'Rourke!" shouted Latimer in answer. "He wants this car to—"

"Damn Detective O'Rourke! That's my car. . . . That's—hey, what the devil is the matter with you?"

For Latimer, meshing the gears in low, suddenly shot that heavy car straight at the officer of the law. He had time to spring backwards with a yell.

"Coming right back!" shouted Latimer, and slid into second gear.

Something bounded beside the car. He reached for his gun as Josephine Worth sprang to the running board, and suddenly clambered in to sit at his side.

## CHAPTER XXXIV

### Common Ground

THERE were four police cars in that block, when Latimer shot the big machine down the street. He saw O'Rourke run out from the sidewalk, his mouth opening and closing as though he were yelling, though the uproar was so great that not a word could be heard. But the explosions of the gun he held were audible enough. The heavy slugs hammered against the bullet-proof glass above the side door.

Latimer took the girl by the shoulder and thrust her to the floor.

She crouched there, crying up at him: "It's bullet-proofed, Charles! They can't get us! They can't get us!"

She began to laugh and clap her hands like a child as Latimer shot down to the end of the block. The car might be bullet-proofed, but not against a high-power rifle. Who among the police was apt to have such a weapon? But certain slugs were nipping right through the car, from end to end!

It was impossible to go straight on. The tumult had brought out a whole sea of Negroes from the adjoining neighborhood. They packed the next block from sidewalk to sidewalk, a solid, dark sea, lit with a white foam of grinning teeth and rolling eyes.

Latimer turned. But the street to the right was almost equally jammed. He turned on the third light, the maneuverable searchlight mounted on the left running board, and shone it down into the faces. The horn had not been able to split the throng apart.

But the blinding flare of that light made them dissolve to right and left. He glanced back as the machine rolled slowly ahead. The throng was spilling back into the space that had just been left empty for him, and into that mass the first of the police cars was bucking slowly. They could not shoot, with such a human background. The headlight of a second police automobile pulled around the corner.

Now that living mass thinned, dissolved. He was able to step on the gas, dodged right around one corner, left around another, then fled down a straightaway. The traffic light turned from green to red. He screeched the siren and leaped the car between the surging heads of the crosswise traffic. Other sirens wailed behind him; they had picked up his trail again.

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The girl pushed herself up onto the seat and looked back. She began reporting as he dodged the car around corners.

"They're coming faster. Now maybe we've left them. No, they're coming again. The wake you cut with your siren, Charles, is the still water through which they come after you. You have to cut through the traffic, and they take advantage of the lull. We can't keep them off. We've got to leave the car!"

He began to hear sounds like steady backfiring; bullets clicked once or twice against the back of the car.

"Now they're shooting at the tires," said the calm, clear voice of the girl. "They'll get us soon unless we leave the car. . . ."

The car staggered as though it had run through a wall. A rear wheel began to bump heavily. The whole machine lurched crazily.

"That's it," said the girl. "They've got a rear tire . . ."

He saw the frozen green of a park lawn, off to the left, under the brown smoke of the naked trees, and he swerved into the entrance, lurched the car across the narrow drive with a half-skid turn, and leaped out of the machine.

The girl ran past him with her winged step. He strode half a pace behind her. The ice in the wind that she faced must be running lances of cold through her hatless, coatless body, but she sprinted straight on, swerved along a path, and turned down towards the edge of a lake.

He saw her goal, then. It was a narrow pier that ran a short distance out into the water. It was incomplete. No boats were tied to it.

Right out on it they ran, and down the step-like irregularity of the unfinished end. Before them, steel piers rose from the water, marking the steps the pierhead would have to travel before it reached the destined end, a dozen yards away. On the lowest steps they crouched, the black of the water just beneath them. There was no stir or lapping of the waves. The lake was frozen still, sheeted over with a thin sheet of ice.

Sirens were cutting the air behind them. Cars stopped. Maneuvering searchlights slid out across the lake, as though the ice made it easier for the light to travel. A machine parked right across the lake and began to sweep the surface with its light.

The stockinged feet of Latimer began to tingle. The cold was eating into him.

He picked up the girl and settled her in his lap. He wrapped his arms around her. Somehow, with his hands and arms he seemed able to cover all her body. Her hair blew into his face, back and forth, back and forth. And she kept smiling, her lips a little parted. When the light had struck over her, dimly from the distance, he saw the flash of her eyes, as though they were drinking up all the radiance. She did not move. She was inert as though she had been hypnotized, as though she slept. One of her arms hung down. He had to lift it and draw it across her breast into the warmth. Only her eyes and her smile were living.

He said: "There's murder in you; there's no more soul in you than there is in a hunting cat; you belong to another man; but I love you."

HE had to bend his head far in to touch her lips. They formed under his kiss. She did not move or speak. Only her eyes traveled over his face. Something tapped stead-

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ily against his breast. That was her heart-beat.

After that moment she said, quickly: "Wait here. I have an idea."

She was out of his arms. Even before she was free from him, the iced wind got into her and he felt her shuddering. She ran up the broken steps of stone and went back along the pier before he could stop her.

Wonder got hold of him; and then the voice of O'Rourke was booming, a flat echo spatting up from the face of the frozen lake.

"Take the pier, there, and go over it!...Hello, there! What's coming out of the dark?"

Latimer understood, at last. If she went in to them and betrayed his hiding place, they would give her a lighter sentence. A face like that could smile its way into state's evidence easily, no doubt. She would go free, and walk with that winged step of hers over the hearts of other men.

Cautiously he peered up over the top of the stones and saw O'Rourke meeting the girl in the middle of the pier. Searchlights from the police cars focused on the scene. He saw the big policemen behind the detective, their frosted breath streaming back over their shoulders in the wind.

And he heard the girl say: "You've got me, Mr. O'Rourke. Rather, the cold has me."

"You're only one bite out of the loaf," said O'Rourke, pulling off his overcoat and wrapping it around her. "Where's Latimer? Back there?"

"Latimer? He's a yellow dog!" said the girl. "He jumped out of the car just as it swerved into the park. He ran like a deer down that street, yonder, and left me alone!"

Latimer stood up. He was very groggy, and not with cold; but a sort of drunken music began to throb and drum in his brain, for she had made payment in his behalf. She had put herself like a bribe into the hands of the law so that he could go free!

He stood up, stepped to the top of the pier, and walked slowly towards them, with the yell of O'Rourke striking him in the face

"It's Latimer! It's Latimer!" he was shouting. "Get your guns on him. Mind him now, and the devil inside him."

Latimer went straight on, slowly. What happened to him had no meaning. They handcuffed his wrists. They anchored him with manacles to a bulky policeman. He looked only at the girl.

"Did you think you could buy me out by paying down yourself?" he asked her. "Did you think I'd let you?"

She said nothing. Her face was not in the least altered from its still, clear beauty; there was no deforming stretching of her mouth as she wept, but the tears rolled down from her eyes. It seemed to him strange that they did not freeze against the white of it.

O'Rourke was calling out a question to him.

"Be still, O'Rourke," he said. And O'Rourke was mysteriously silent.

"It's more than you've done for the rest of 'em," said Latimer, "including that handsome bucko in Buffalo. . . ."

"Do you mean Jim?" she said. "Ah, Charlie, Charlie, Charlie, couldn't you see by his face? Couldn't you tell that it was my brother?"

They were jammed into O'Rourke's car, presently, close together. And Latimer said: "What was it that Jim was ashamed to do, when you were talking to him?"

"He'd come on to Buffalo partly

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to be in the East near Cobb, nearer than the Far West, at least, and partly because there was a chance for him to get work as an engineer, up there. He'd dug up the copy of the old *Willoughby Messenger* and he had a foolish idea that through it we could fight out the case in the courts and show that we had a right to share in the Cobb estate, because Cobb had robbed us. I begged him to stay on in Buffalo with his engineering work and trust everything to me. But I'd done so many strange things, dropping out of sight in New York and all that, that Jim would hardly trust me. I only barely managed to persuade him. He was ashamed to let me go on alone, you see? He really thought that the mention of the gold strike in the newspaper would be a good basis for a lawsuit."

"What did the telegram mean?" asked Latimer. "DICK SINKING FAST STRIKE NOW"?

"It was from my uncle, Tom, to tell me that my father was very ill and that if anything was to be done, it had better be hurried. But father has taken a turn for the better, now."

"Be still," said O'Rourke. "Will you close up? Or do I have to put you in separate cars?"

## CHAPTER XXXV

### Shares

O'ROURKE took them back to 2118 Beauregard Street, where the police cordoned the ends of the block. He took them back into the basement of the old house. Here two pairs of exhibitions, carefully recovered from the roof of the building by the searching police, were replaced on the freezing feet of the captives.

They had a whole battery of flashlights to illumine the scene. Police everywhere as a background, and in the center the important group of Pete Winslow and Champion, the girl with Latimer, Campbell and Lawrence Purvis Pelton, O'Rourke. Campbell was studying with care a little slide of celluloid and the writing on the back of an old envelope.

O'Rourke, therefore, took command.

"I guess we've got 'em all," he said. "Grosvenor's been had, and the rest are all here. Come now, Angus. Have you got a patrol wagon out there, sergeant, or one car big enough to hold all of us, because I'm not going to be parted from any of these beauties. They've got to go all together."

Campbell said: "Wait—will you wait a minute?"

O'Rourke laughed happily.

"What's there to wait for, brother?" he asked. "There's everything that we want to ask for. We've got the beef and the tomatoes and the potatoes and the onions and the whole damned stew, ain't we?"

Campbell looked up with the dull, open eye of a sleep-walker.

"Cobb never rode on the train!" he said.

O'Rourke winked at the sergeant. "Be easy," he said. "Humor him a little. He had a great-grand-uncle that used to see ghosts and read dreams. The Scotch are a queer lot entirely. All right, Angus. You and me sat with him in the stateroom and witnessed his will . . . but if you say so, John Cobb didn't ride in the train."

And he laughed as he ended this speech.

It had no effect on Campbell; the irony brought no glint into his vacant eye.

"Cobb never stepped on the train,"

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he said. "While you and me were in that stateroom, John Cobb was sitting in a iron chair with his face melted back by the fire, and his body roasted like burned pork. Cobb was dead those hours before!"

"This is a good one," said O'Rourke. "Go ahead and deduce something for the boys, Angus. He's a regular deducer, like Sherlock Holmes and the rest, sergeant. He's a book detective. Yeah, he reads books and studies things. Takes night courses in ballistics, and the study of handwriting, and he's a fingerprint expert too! There's nobody like old Angus. So go on and deduce, Angus. Let's hear you!"

"It's the handwriting that does the trick," said Campbell, his face as lost in a dream as before. "D'you see, Pat? Here in the will and there in the signature of the real John Cobb at the bottom of his picture; and the writing of the dirty hound that murdered John Cobb; and then dressed in his clothes, and went to New York for protection, and used us for goats to witness the will he forged for himself; and uncorked the chloroform bottle; and stopped the train, and slid himself out the window; and dragged a trail back to the place where the dead man already was sitting. . . ."

"Lookout!" called the sergeant.

But as a matter of fact, there was no need to beware; it was simply that Lawrence P. Pelton had fainted to the floor.

"IT couldn't be," said O'Rourke, at the police station, with whiskey before him and a cigar gripped in his teeth. "You could scare Pelton damn near to death, but it couldn't be true! How could Pelton have wangled getting to Cobb's place, and then leave the train and back to his home in Minnesota?"

"He had a high-power plane that could do damn near two hundred miles an hour," said Campbell.

"The plane was broken, and useless, man!"

"It was not. That was the alibi. There was only a part missing. A part missing! Hell, Pat, couldn't you see how easy that was? He calls out a mechanic and shows him a broken part. Before the mechanic has got back to Lassiter, long before, that plane of Pelton's is hitting it up through the sky. It's not so many thousands of miles. Six or seven hours, eh? Oh, he had plenty of time, if he worked it on a schedule!"

O'Rourke stared like a punch-drunk pugilist.

"He's got an amphibian," said Campbell. "He lands it in the Hudson, where it leaves no traces, he goes up to Cobb's house. He takes him for a walk into the woods, and along in the dark of the evening he murders John Cobb. He goes back to the house, dresses in Cobb's clothes, telephones in Cobb's name to Corrigan, gets to the train. He has the look of Cobb about him, small, dark, mustache and all. But he don't take chances. He keeps his hat down and his collar up. Remember he wouldn't have light in the stateroom? And you and me damning him for a coward and a fool! He forges the will under our noses, with the jerking of the train to explain why the writing is so wobbly. All except the signature. And he has that down pretty pat. He's practiced that a million times, I suppose. He flows it off. A pretty good thing, if nobody looks at it close. But if a man that knows—if a man that's studied handwriting by night; if a man like that takes one good look—he sees

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that it's master Lawrence Pelton that done the writing!"

O'Rourke, stunned, swallowed his glass of whiskey and refilled it carefully.

"And he wrote the letters that had scared Cobb, and made Cobb whine to Corrigan, before?" suggested O'Rourke feebly.

"Not him!" said Campbell. "Those letters came from people that had a reason for knifing Cobb. The people he'd crooked out West at the Willoughby Lode. He writes and tells Pelton he's in fear for his life. He's coming West to get some bigger spaces between him and the horizon. He'll take such and such a train. He reserves a seat on it. When Pelton hears that, he sees his chance. He writes the letter that promises the killing of Cobb before the morning of that day. He frames his alibi by calling the mechanic. Then he comes on the jump! But some of those others from the West—they've got wind that Cobb is going to move. They make connections with that same train."

"Angus," said O'Rourke sadly, "I been a fool, and you've got the real brain!"

"You found the sand; you found the footprint; you found the dead man," said Campbell. "Where would I of been without all that groundwork done?"

"Would you kindly mind tellin' me, Angus," said O'Rourke, "what got your head jumping first of all on Pelton?"

"It was thinking how much of a family look there was between this Pelton and Cobb, except that he didn't have a mustache. And then I read that Pelton *did* have a mustache, that happened to get burned off. D'you see? Was there ever a man that thought farther back behind everything that he did? He takes off the mustache. Suppose that the witnesses to the will see him afterwards, they won't recognize him as the man that rode in the stateroom with him!...It all works out. There's only Grosvenor. He wasn't a part of the seven that were robbed by John Cobb. How does he come into this?"

"On the side. I can see that now," said O'Rourke. "Go back to Pelton dressed in the clothes of John Cobb and making for the train. He knows it's unlikely that anybody'll be there that would know John Cobb, that lives so much to himself. It's not likely, neither, that anybody'll be there that knows Pelton, from the West. Still there's plenty of people on a big train. And one of them looks at Pelton, and knows him sure. D'you see?"

"I *do* see!" cried Campbell. "Afterwards he comes back to the stateroom and sees Pelton. He wonders is Pelton sick, that he acts so strange. He sits down in that stateroom and talks, and Pelton, ah, man! what a sick fellow is Pelton when he knows he's recognized. Aye, it would spoil everything," said O'Rourke. "For the case of Pelton all hangs on the point that John Cobb is riding on that train. And that he himself is away back there in Minnesota. It's too late to change. Cobb's dead already. The will's forged and in the hands of Campbell. There's only the one chance to take —to put all the cards face up in front of Grosvenor—knowing him for a dirty dog—and to offer him fifty per cent of the deal. You see, Angus?"

"Of course I see. It's beautiful, Pat. It's a beautiful thing, ain't it?"

"It is," said O'Rourke. "That's why Grosvenor got the five thousand. Just an earnest of what's to come

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when the estate's settled. But Pelton won't trust him. He don't want that leech suckin' the blood out of him. So he follows Grosvenor out of the hotel."

"Till the point where he sees Grosvenor on top of me, ready for murder," broke in Campbell. "And it means nothing to Pelton except a chance to stab Grosvenor in the back. He's already got a handkerchief of Grosvenor's that he's picked up in his hotel room, perhaps. And so he wraps that around his hand and slides the knife into the back of Grosvenor . . . and runs right out into the hands of Pat O'Rourke!"

O'ROURKE, that same day, said to Peter Winslow: "Suppose that young McGuire didn't appear to press the charge against you, Pete? Would that open you up and make you talk?"

"Will you do that for me?" asked Winslow?

"I've done it," said O'Rourke.

"Why, give me a drink, then," said Pete, "and I'll tell you the whole yarn."

He began slowly:

"Go back to the day that me and Jay Markham went prospecting in the name of us, and the other five that had formed a kind of a company, to split up any luck that any of us found. And that day we *do* find luck. It's back in the sand dunes that a knob of rock sticks six inches out of the sand. We tap it. It cracks open and shows us the doggondest thing that any man ever seen. Why, only the weight of that rock was enough of a story. We shoveled away some of the sand and saw where the vein ran. We shoveled the sand back. We went on along the direction of it. And did you remember the two lines across the map, at the angles, up on top?"

"I remember," said O'Rourke, nodding.

"That's where we found more outcroppings. And we come back to the dot; that was where we'd started from, that day, and where we'd been digging. We mapped every foot of the way, and then Markham says to me that we ought to keep this under our hats, because likely there's millions in it, and so we shouldn't say a word to the other five.

"That made me sour. I damned him for the idea, and a minute later he tried to hit me with his pick, and I shot him. I went back into camp with our specimen, and you know the rest. Even the five of them that I'd held out for doubted me, except good old Alec Latimer. So I went up for life. But I made up my mind that nobody'd get rich on what I'd found, and I hid the map before I went to prison. I'll cut through all those years to the time when I met up with John Cobb. He was wearing a different name, and he was in for a year for some dirty job. But I sort of liked him; and one day I told him the yarn. He went wild. He told me when he got out he'd work the locations if I'd give 'em to him, and then he'd buy me out of the prison.

"Of course, an old hand like me only laughed at him. He asked if he could buy me out, would I give him the half share? I said I would, of course, and thought no more about it, but he's not free for six months before I get my pardon and walk out. Where Cobb got the money, I don't know; more dirty work, I suppose. Anyway, there I was free, and I led Cobb right to the place where the plan was located. It was the last that I ever seen of the map. He kept promising to show

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it to me. And in the meantime, he locates and starts work on those two upper points. It's thirty years, nearly, since I've looked at the map, and the distances I've all forgotten. And who could find anything in that rolling sea of sand except he had a map to go by?

"Well, there was machinery and things to buy, and Cobb ran everything. When I asked him what he was making, he said that it was slow pay, and that the machinery was eating up a lot of the profits, but just the same he was giving me plenty of money, a thousand every ten days or so. And I didn't think too much till he'd cleaned out the two veins in short order, and suddenly he folds up and goes back East. He'd taken out millions, d'you see? When I heard how rich he was, I tried to get close to him. It was no good. He kept me off, and I didn't have a legal claim in the world.

"All I knew was that the first strike me and Markham had made, the richest of all, hadn't been worked. Cobb's idea, I guess, was to wait till things settled down, and then go out and clean that up, too. The trouble he wanted to settle down was because I'd turned to the old members of the seven partners. I told 'em everything; how Cobb was robbing me, and that meant them, too. I got them together. Markham was dead, of course. So was Latimer, the best of the lot; but Alec Latimer had left a son able to fill his shoes, as maybe you know, O'Rourke. Dick Worth was sick, and left only a girl, his niece, to carry on for him. Glenn and Waterson, both dead without heirs.

"There was left old Harry Champion, and Josephine Worth, and Charlie Latimer, and me. You see? I break the news to them all, and we plan things together—the three men, mostly, because the girl's only a girl, and we leave her pretty much out. Latimer never even laid eyes on her till he chanced into her on the train, don't you see?

"We begin to put the pressure on Cobb. Champ writes the letters with my help. Latimer goes out East to keep an eye on Cobb. We put on pressure, and it's plain that Cobb is scared. We all gather in New York, with Latimer putting up the cash for us. And now there's where a big chance comes in. Because out from the West they send Josephine Worth. Her uncle is dead sick, and they want to get something out of Mr. Robber Cobb. She comes on, tries to see Cobb, gets shut out of the house, and finally trails him to the train just the way Latimer trails him to the train.

"Because Latimer had cut in on Cobb enough to know that that reservation on the train had been made. He calls me and Champ out to the country to try to search the house for the map while he trails Cobb to Chicago and sees what's happening out there. You know most of the rest of it. On the train, Jo goes and pleads with the man she thinks is Cobb. He throws her out. Latimer gets in there for a minute, too, but Pelton won't let him stay and he don't recognize the difference between Pelton and the real Cobb in the half-light. All he does, like a mug, is to think that Jo Worth is a crook, and he starts following her crookedness . . . and then you are on the spot and ready to raise hell—and a whole lot of trouble nearly got started, Mr. O'Rourke."

"AND what," said Campbell one day, as he sat with Latimer and Mrs. Charles (Josephine) Latimer, "what was the reason that Cobb would have all those pictures hanging in that

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dressing room? What would he want of them?"

"Because he lived on meanness the way a cat lives on milk, Campbell," said Latimer. "And every day, out in the quiet of that house of his, when he dressed or when he undressed, he thought about how he had trimmed seven men, living or dead. He had the pictures of some of the dead men. He put mine into the group to represent my dead father. I suppose it was a thing that made him laugh twice a day."

"His money goes all to the state. There's not one of you that can put a claim in for it, is there?" asked Campbell.

"Not a one," said Latimer. "We've lost that. But there's still the richest vein of all to work; and the company of Worth, Latimer, Champion and Winslow are going to work it. We're thinking of putting down some shares in the names of Campbell and O'Rourke."

"It's a grand thought," said Campbell. "But will you tell me one thing, Jo? Tell me the truth about the poor devil of a fellow at headquarters who has confessed that as soon as the men from Cobb's house telephoned in, he phoned back to you to tell you that Cobb was taking the train. Is that the truth?"

"When I got to New York," she said, "I was hungry to see John Cobb and beg him to do right by my father; we thought that dad was dying, just then. And to keep track of him and where he might dodge to, I saw one of the men that sat at the telephone exchange in police...I'm sorry if I've hurt his career as a policeman. . . ."

"You didn't hurt him," said Campbell. "The dog was a regular leak that passed out news about more cases than yours. . . . Did you think, really, that talking to John Cobb would do your case any good?"

"I did hope so," said she.

Campbell and Latimer looked steadily at one another, smiling with the superior wisdom, the pitying superknowledge, of the stronger sex. The girl, watching them, would not let herself smile at all. There was only a faint light of mockery in her eyes.

THE END

## The Countess Sends a C. O. D.

THERE are many variations to the old C. O. D. racket. A variation in which the package was delivered by express figured prominently in the profit-and-loss column of the books of a leading hotel in New York City. A woman, whose stationery proclaimed her to be Countess Something-or-Other, wrote to the hotel supposedly from California where the climate is said to be very good for the health. In the letter she intimated that she would like a suite reserved for her return to New York. The letter also disclosed that there was a small matter connected to some furs which she wanted attended to. When the furs were delivered it was found that they were insured for several thousand dollars and that there was a C.O.D. charge of about four hundred dollars on them. The hotel paid this charge and retained the furs. The Countess hasn't shown up yet and the furs appear to be slightly mildewed.

—*John Berry.*

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# Civil Service Q & A

By "G-2"

## Could You Qualify as—

| | |
|---|---|
| Special Agent (G-Man) | Police Patrolman |
| Secret Service Operative | Police Detective |
| Post Office Inspector | Policewoman |
| Customs Patrol | Fingerprint Expert |
| Immigration Patrol | State Trooper |
| Anti-Narcotic Agent | Crime Prevention Investigator |
| Parole Investigator | Probation Officer |
| Prison Keeper | Criminologist |
| Internal Revenue Agent | Police Radio Expert |
| Alcohol Tax Agent | |

*This department will give you every week typical questions asked in civil service examinations.*

### Sample Bookkeeper Test

THE bookkeeping test which is here reproduced may be considered the last word in this type of examination. It was given for the first time in 1936, when it was taken by 5,000 competitors. It differs from all previous tests for bookkeeper in that it emphasizes general education. Another departure from the old form of test is the use of the multiple answer and fill-in type of questions. Formerly bookkeeper tests were chiefly problems in bookkeeping. This modern test consists of both—general education and bookkeeping—and because general education is stressed the first part of the test will prove interesting to any reader seeking to check up on his general education and knowledge.

Both men and women were admitted to the test but they were warned in advance that they could not reasonably expect to pass unless they had a senior high school education or its equivalent. The job for which the test was given is officially described as bookkeeper, grade 2, the pay $1,200 to $1,790 a year; the duties, to compute, post or compile data in connection with functional or unit cost accounting; to keep general ledgers and controlling accounts or subsidiary records; to balance or adjust accounts, take trial balances, make journal entries, write statements and bills, prepare special reports and perform duties of a similar nature. The requirements; high proficiency in bookkeeping practice and thorough knowledge of bookkeeping theory, ability to pass tests of general education that call for evidence of understanding, orderliness, thoroughness, ability and facility which usually are developed only by systematic and sustained schooling. No high school diploma was required of competitors. Ratings and weights were fixed as follows: general educational test, weight 2, 75% required to pass; bookkeeping test, weight 8, 75% required to pass. Age limits for competitors was fixed at 20 to 39 years.

The test follows exactly as it was given:

SPECIAL INSTRUCTIONS: if you read these instructions carefully, you will not need to make inquiries. Monitors are not authorized to change these instructions or the terms and conditions of this examination. Do not attempt to obtain information or to give information to another



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candidate. If you do, you will be disqualified.

TIME SCHEDULE: You will answer questions in the general educational test on the accompanying answer sheet. One hour will be allowed in which to complete the test. A bell will be rung and you will then open the examination book and begin work. Do not open the book until the bell rings. At the end of an hour, the bell will be rung, at which time you must stop all work in this test and hand your book and answer sheet to the monitor. You will then receive the bookkeeping test and three hours will be allowed in which to complete the bookkeeping test. A bell will be rung at the beginning and at the end of the bookkeeping test.

All answers must be entered in ink. Answers written in pencil will not be rated. Illegible answers will be penalized. If you make a mistake cross it out clearly so that no doubt is left as to what you wish counted for your answer. Two sheets of scratch paper will be furnished you in connection with the examination. Follow all directions exactly. Failing to follow instructions will be penalized. If you are not sure that your response to any question is correct, omit the item. Do not guess.

GENERAL EDUCATIONAL TEST: Only one of the answers numbered below is correct. Encircle the number of the correct answer.

Q1—What per cent of 5 is 3? (a) 80%; (b) 60%; (c) 40%; (d) 35%; (e) 50%.

Q2—63% of 100 equals (a) 63; (b) 6.3; (c) .63; (d) .063; (e) .0063.

Q3—In terms of per cent 1.09 is (a) .0109%; (b) 1.09%; (c) .109%; (d) 109%; (e) 10.9%.

Q4—In terms of per cent 2¾ is (a) 275%; (b) 75%; (c) 175%; (d) 100%; (e) 25%.

Q5—28½ minus 19¾ is (a) 8¼; (b) 8¾; (c) 8½; (d) 9; (e) 8.

Q6—The sum of 83 plus 8.3 plus 3.61 is (a) 94.91; (b) 169.61; (c) 202.1; (d) 452.3; (e) 94.64.

Q7—The product of 1/6 times 1/6 is (a) 1/12; (b) 1/36; (c) 0; (d) 2/6; (e) 1.

Q8—Half of 73 added to ¾ of 20 is (a) 48¾; (b) 93; (c) 64½; (d) 51½; (e) 37.

Q9—.032 subtracted from 7.43 is (a) 7.462; (b) 6.91; (c) 7.398; (d) 4.23; (e) 7.11.

Q10—The sum of 1/3 plus ½ plus 1/6 is (a) 2½; (b) 1½; (c) ½; (d) 5/8; (e) 1.

Q11—The product of .046 multiplied by .0082 is (a) .3722; (b) .003772; (c) .0003772; (d) .00003772; (e) .03772.

Q12—The quotient of 496.28 divided by .076 is (a) .6530; (b) 6.530; (c) 65.30; (d) 653.0; (e) 6530.0.

Q13—The quotient of ½ divided by ½ is (a) 1; (b) ½; (c) 1/8; (d) 1/16; (e) ¼.

Q14—The number of days from August 15 to September 9 is (a) 25; (b) 26; (c) 27; (d) 28; (e) 29.

Q15—The sum of 3/5 of 65 plus 4/7 of 91 is (a) 91; (b) 39; (c) 127; (d) 52; (e) 13.

Q16—Thirty-two per cent of ten per cent is (a) 32.0; (b) 3.20; (c) .320; (d) 320; (e) .032.

Q17—If 2 articles cost 7 cents, a gross will cost (a) $.14; (b) $5.04; (c) $3.71; (d) $2.01; (e) $.79.

Q18—1.4% of $200 is (a) $28.00; (b) $280.00; (c) $2.80; (d) $2800.00; (e) $.28.

Q19—The premium on a $3,000 insurance policy at $.71 per $100 is (a) $21.30; (b) $30; (c) $42.16; (d) $26.70; (e) $23.31.

Q20—A 4% discount on a bill for $250 amounts to (a) $.25; (b) $7.50; (c) $8; (d) $10; (e) $6.25.

Q21—To find the interest at 7%, find the interest at 6% first, and then add 1/6 of (a) 6%; (b) .6%; (c) 7%; (d) .7%; (e) 6.5%.

Q22—Four years' interest on $1,500 at 5% per annum is (a) $500; (b) $200; (c) $450; (d) $150; (e) $300.

Q23—Office furniture listed at $96 on which a discount of 16 2/3 is allowed should cost (a) $70; (b) $75; (c) $80; (d) $75; (e) $90.

Q24—A bookkeeper buys a set of books for $6.51 and is told that this price includes a reduction of 30%. What was the original price of the set? (a) $9.30; (b) $2.79; (c) $19.53; (d) $8.40; (e) $39.50.

Q25—A bankrupt firm pays its creditors 45% of what is due them. If $2,340 is paid to F. K. Smith what is Mr. Smith's loss? (a) $2,160; (b) $2,543.25; (c) $2,860; (d) $2,949; (e) $5,200.

(NOTE: Key answers will not be given.

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If you have correctly worked out each problem you will know which one of the five answers is correct. But bear in mind you are working against a time limit of 1 hour for the general educational test and these mathematical problems are only a part of the test.)

SECTION TWO—GENERAL EDUCATIONAL TEST. Two words have been omitted from each sentence below. The first word omitted is among the first four key words numbered 1, 2, 3 and 4. The last word omitted is among the last four key words numbered 5, 6, 7, and 8. Encircle on your answer sheet the numbers of the TWO WORDS which best complete each sentence.

SAMPLE: ——are used when it —— (1) cigars; (2) buttons; (3) umbrellas; (4) flowers; (5) rains; (6) starts; (7) lightens; (8) stings. Answer; 3-5. Now proceed with the following:

Q26— —— is a sum paid for the use of —— (1) loss; (2) interest; (3) profit; (4) commodity; (5) business; (6) books; (7) foresight; (8) money.

Q 27— —— is used as a measure of— (1) time; (2) money; (3) bookkeeping; (4) years; (5) character; (6) arithmetic; (7) value; (8 seconds.

Q28—Bookkeeping rules are only commonsense ways of —— things in the way that has been proven best by —— (1) being; (2) doing; (3) thinking; (4) feeling; (5) experience; (6) future; (7) intuition; (8) speech.

Q29— —— is fundamental in the equipment —— a bookkeeper; (1) accuracy; (2) credit; (3) account; (4) pencil; (5) of; (6) in; (7) with; (8) to.

Q30— —— training is necessary to produce the —— computer; (1) little; (2) considerable; (3) few; (4) many; (5) skill; (6) expert; (7) arithmetic; (8) prowess.

Q31—The bookkeeper —— one —— of office worker (1) is; (2) were; (3) was; (4) are; (5) number; (6) efficiency; (7) type; (8) specie.

Q32—Many business enterprises have —— on account of bad —— (1) prices; (2) finances; (3) losses; (4) capital; (5) wealth; (6) debts; (7) costs; (8) profits.

Q33—More than —— arithmetical ability is demanded of a —— bookkeeper; (1) mere; (2) excessive; (3) most; (4) nearly; (5) average; (6) bad; (7) mediocre; (8) good.

Q34— —— in bookkeeping should be —— on conditions as they are in business; (1) deposits; (2) accountancy; (3) courses; (4) school; (5) based; (6) followed; (7) taught; (8) kept.

Q35—Some people —— that accounting is no more —— glorified bookkeeping; (1) believe; (2) ignore; (3) sure; (4) convince; (5) which; (6) when; (7) if; (8) than.

Q36— —— control of a service or product is known as —— (1) inadequate; (2) complete; (3) democratic; (4) unsatisfactory; (5) utility; (6) republic; (7) monopoly; (8) solvency.

Q37—Extensive —— schooling is not necessarily the —— of a good education (1) formal; (2) educated; (3) much; (4) high; (5) half; (6) superior; (7) equivalent; (8) lesser.

Q38— —— means the —— of expenses, (1) reinforcement; (2) increment; (3) entrenchment; (4) retrenchment; (5) level; (6) reduction; (7) straightening; (8) support.

Q39—Income is not —— —— profit (1) same; (2) actual; (3) indistinguishable; (4) synonymous; (5) to; (6) as; (7) under; (8) with.

Q40—It is desirable to check —— by adding the column in —— order, (1) division; (2) multiplication; (3) addition; (4) subtraction; (5) identical; (6) double; (7) reverse; (8) horizontal.

Key answers to the above will be given next week at the conclusion of the test on general educational qualifications. Write now the actual time consumed in answering the questions thus far submitted: ——hrs. —— minutes —— seconds.

L. T. Bates, Denver, Harry T. Barnes, St. Louis. Federal tests for electrician, custodial service, Postoffice Department, are non-assembled, unwritten examinations. The starting pay is $1,860 per annum; age limit, 20 but not the 55th birthday. Applicants must have had at least 4 years apprentice experience as all-around electrician, or equivalent experience. Last test for this job was held early in 1936.

**Next Week—Bookkeeper Test (Continued)**

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# They're Swindling You!

## Doctor Bunk

## By

## Frank Wrentmore

*This is the fifty-ninth of a series of articles exposing business rackets that cost you billions of dollars every year! Mr. Wrentmore is an authority on swindles and frauds, well known to legal, financial and commercial associations.—The Editor.*

OLD "Dr." Brooks has come to grief again. I want particularly to tell you about the "Doc," because he is typical of a number of fakers who constantly travel the country from Maine to California giving lectures, selling "health" foods and frequently taking your money for their worthless nostrums.

A few months ago "Doc" Brooks arrived in Toledo, Ohio, and later established his offices in the basement of the First Westminster Church. I mention the name of the church because of the fact that it probably added to the "Doc's" prestige to be located in a church and also because they should have satisfied themselves—as they could have done, quite easily—that he was not a fraud.

Brooks advertised and then gave lectures—for a fee—on "Mindology," whatever that may be. During, or following his lectures, "Doc" recommended that members of his audience purchase his famous "Norma-Vida" tablets, 250 tablets for five dollars.

One citizen of Toledo was suspicious of the "Doc" and reported to the Toledo Better Business Bureau that the "Norma-Vida" tablets were evidently a product of the "H & H Laboratories," Los Angeles, Calif. An inquiry to the Los Angeles Better Business Bureau brought the information that Michael Erim Brooks, who claimed to be a great teacher and master scientist, in 1933 had conducted the Norma-Vida Institute in that city and delivered a lecture course—for a fee—under the title, "Mindology and the Norma-Vida Institute." During the lectures, Brooks made claims of being seventy-five years of age, yet acted, looked and functioned as a man of thirty-five. (To county authorities in Toledo, he stated he was born May 19, 1888.)

Another inquiry made by the Toledo Bureau was to the American Medical Association in Chicago and brought the information that on January 31, 1931, one M. E. Brooks had pleaded

**"I am glad to endorse the program of *Detective Fiction Weekly* which will bring to its readers the truth about rackets and racketeers. No man can be swindled if he knows in advance what the swindler is going to do—and nobody *wants* to be swindled."—Edward L. Greene, General Manager of the National Better Business Bureau.**



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guilty of violating the State Medical Practice Act of California and that the Board of Medical Examiners of California produced evidence that Brooks referred to himself as "Dr. M. E. Brooks" and claimed to master disease through diet and a nostrum which he called "Vivogen." It was also charged that he had treated one woman for cancer for several months, causing her to postpone treatment until her condition was beyond help.

BROOKS also at one time sold another nostrum called "Glandogen," which is called a gland food prepared as a "result of years of study and research by the drugless master of disease, M. E. Brooks." "Glandogen," later known as "Morex," was misbranded and as a result Federal officials seized a quantity which was later condemned and ordered destroyed by a United States Court.

Having satisfied itself that "Dr." Brooks was not at all what he claimed to be, the Toledo Bureau turned this evidence over to the Ohio State Medical Board which assigned Inspector Frank A. Dorsey to the case. Dorsey and Mrs. Grace Franke, Toledo police matron, investigated and the "drugless master of disease" accepted their money for diagnosing and prescribing for their *supposed* ailments.

They arrested Brooks on August 1, 1936, and on August 5 Brooks pleaded guilty and was fined one thousand dollars and costs by Judge J. M. McCabe, who later suspended seven hundred and fifty dollars of the fine on condition that Brooks promise not to reengage in the illegal practice of medicine.

That's the story of only one case. I could name a dozen of these gentry, some of whom have served prison terms, yet who are still in circulation. They usually establish themselves in one of the best hotels in cities of 100,000 population or more, rent one of the parlors or assembly rooms for their lectures, advertise in the newspapers, and, in the beginning, give a few free talks to excite the interest of those who respond to such appeals.

These lectures frequently include a bit of religious discussion, a smattering of psychology, a touch of health culture and this leads most naturally to a very frank talk on sex, which is exactly what the smut-minded in their audiences are looking for.

Some, if not most, of these frauds parade a string of letters after their names which actually represent degrees they have purchased in diploma mills. If their real alma maters were named in the same fashion, the record would read, "Sing Sing, two years; Joliet, three years; San Quentin, one year," et cetera.

The real damage done by these quacks doesn't end with the money they pilfer from those who are foolish enough to part with it, but, as in the Brooks case, they are sometimes successful in inducing some deluded individuals who have real ailments to forsake their regular medical advisers to follow the trail which leads to an early grave.

If you think this is a petty racket, banish the thought. Some of the more successful of these mountebanks will gross twenty thousand dollars in a six weeks' lecture campaign.

It may be that I have been too harsh. Should I retract? I will, in a way. I'll admit that most of these getlemen *are* "Masters of Psychology"—the psychology of the sucker!

**Next Week—Stock Sharping**

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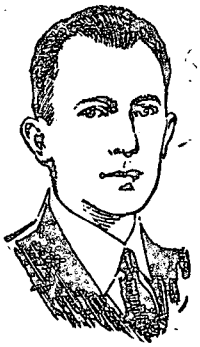
# Solving Cipher Secrets

**A cipher is secret writing. The way to solve ciphers is to experiment with substitute letters until real words begin to appear. In solving, notice the frequency of certain letters. For instance, the letters e, t, a, o, n, i, are the most used in our language. So if the puzzle maker has used X to represent e, X will probably appear very frequently. Combinations of letters will also give you clues. Thus, the affixes -ing, -ion, -ally are frequent. Read the helpful hints at the beginning of this department each week. The first cryptogram each week is the easiest.**



M. E. OHAVER
"Sunyam"

BE a "cryptocorrespondent"! Join our *Cipher Correspondence Club!* Just send us your name and address for publication, and we'll list you in the Club Directory—membership is free! The purpose of the Club is to put you in contact with others who are interested in ciphers, methods of solving them, etc. Here is the latest installment of the Directory. Drop these new members a line and send us your own name for membership!

CIPHER CORRESPONDENCE CLUB
*(Continued from Oct. 24, 1936)*

PAP, Franklin Mumpower, Kingston, Mo.
Merland Edwards, 1137 Ninth Avenue East, Twin Falls, Idaho.
A. F. T., Arthur Tebbe, 602 W. Michigan St., Sidney, Ohio.
SEGRO, Mrs. Ronni Grose, 1250 Madison St., Brooklyn, N. Y.
Gene Miller, Petersburg, Ind.
*(To Be Continued)*

Club Notes: A. F. T. would especially like to hear from other fans in Sidney, Ohio. Get in touch with him, ye Sidneyites! SEGRO would appreciate hearing from some members who could help her with the cryptograms, etc. And Gene Miller, who, by the way, is the Assistant Postmaster at Petersburg, says, "I am just a neophyte, but I'd be glad of assistance." Give these new correspondents a helping hand, cryptofans! Change of address: ZARKOV, L. A. Chapin, *former address* 615 Congress St. S., Aberdeen, S. Dak.; *new address* General Delivery, Aberdeen, S. Dak. Members are requested to report promptly all changes of address.

Last week's Inner Circle cipher, Waltraw's No. 276, was pangrammatic, thus providing the solver with the chance to find *q*, with the resultant discovery of XSFLJYV (*antique*). Also, by frequency and finality, symbol R reacted as *y*, suggesting the ending *-ys* for -RK, and leading to the compound FGHKR-FYBPR (---*sy* ----*y*), *topsy-turvy;* and so on.

Opening this week's ciphers, Mahdi uses a two-word key phrase, numbered *01234 56789*, in her cryptic division. Find *zero* by inspection. Next determine if S is *odd* or *even*, and identify it in S × L = A and S × A = L. Try for the phrases XFS SXB ZB SXB and STXS ETXOTH, noting -'H, in Ariana's contribution. Compare H, HPP, and SDPPHK in the next cipher, by °Magi (the degree sign indicates *Inner Circle Club* membership).

In Mizpah's cipher, note the two-letter word BZ in connection with PZBBZA. Follow up with BVXZSOV, BVGR, and GRBGX. The endings -EGT, -ZL, and -ZLLEBG provide entry in Rain-in-the-Face's message. Having guessed these, identify RDBTDZLLEBG and RZDLREDZL. A solution of Hoodwink's Inner Circle cipher and the answers to all of this week's puzzles will be given next week. Asterisks in crypts indicate capitalization.

No. 277—Cryptic Division. By Mahdi.

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RHS)GLYIVG(LAY
GIRA
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 ERYV
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No. 278—In Late November. By Ariana.

"FVP *XNKNAF'H UYGT ZNGFH HEVPEB XEVFD KRT PVVSH, XFS SXB ZB SXB KRT STXS ETXOTH UXEE XFS, ATEK, XFS FYDRK ZB FYDRK KRT AVFYKVGB ZEXHK PXYEH YF KRT LTB-RVET."—*XEEYFDRXA.

No. 279—A Beggar Bold. By °Magi.

BNXY-SDPPHK FLDKZ: H OTV RNL H LKHXYPNGA VHG BDK H SDPPHK. "ZDT FTKY RHXY H GYKXY LD HFE BDK FD VTUR." "MYPP, ZDT FYY, N'V CTLLNGA HPP VZ 'OYAF' NG DGY 'HFE NL.'"

No. 280—An Inside Job. By Mizpah.

KYLDHSY AEUG GRBGX TSOZSB ULRZG; GLB VZYGF BVXZSOV PZBBZA, FERMERO UXLHB. XZTGRBF BVGR FNEA LFVZXG BZ FLHGBD.

No. 281—The Missing Beard. By Rain-in-the-Face.

ANCNDEFGH-YFGZK YFZLHDB, YEGNL OFGKPQZ, RZDHNDSL REFGELH RAFPEGT UBGUZDHB. FDHELH, YELUFAUNAFHEGT FDRZTTEB, RDBKNUZL UFUBRVBGEU RDBTDZLLEBG. RZDLREDZL RDBXNLZAP.

No. 282—Along the Shore. By Hoodwink.

ROLLAWAY CRULP, YUABYAVOBR DARK NFRFPBNE OTFABUG, CDOZR *HFEW YUNCR. VOXNCRNROV NLON FBVOL PNLRANE END.

## LAST WEEK'S ANSWERS

271—Key: 0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9
C R Y P T A L B U M

272—An auto driver's license costs but a few cents, but the holder has the privilege of hunting pedestrians for a whole year!

273—Knock! Knock! "Who's there?" "Detect." "Detect who?" "Detective Fiction Weekly!"—Knock! Knock! "Who's there?" "Wee." "Wee who?" "Weekly cryptograms!"

274—Posses, vigilantes, deputy sheriffs watch roads, byways; hunt gangling, adolescent boy criminal. Big reward offered!

275—Dusky Sioux needs more Indian blankets. Sends mail order pronto. Blankets quickly arrive via air mail. Everybody happy now. Ugh! Ugh!

276—Buxom young housewife, ardent curioso, finds antique virtu within topsy-turvy junk shop. Buys ancient bronze demijohn plus weird carved ivory image.

Send us your answers, cryptofans, to any of this week's cipher puzzles! You will be credited for your solutions in our *Cipher Solvers' Club* for November. Address: M. E. Ohaver, Detective Fiction Weekly, 280 Broadway, New York, N. Y.

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# FLASHES from READERS

A GENTLEMAN named Amos X. Peabody has just been in the editorial office. He states that he's read every issue and every story in every issue of FLYNN'S and DETECTIVE FICTION WEEKLY since the issue of February 28, 1931. He says that's a record of some sort—that possibly we should give him service stripes.

It set us to thinking. Perhaps other readers have similar — or even more curious—records. It would please the editorial staff greatly if such record-holders would drop us a letter outlining their claims. The best letters will be published in this department.

---

The first reader reaction on "Seven Faces."

DEAR EDITOR:

I've just finished reading the first installment of Max Brand's newest novel, "Seven Faces." You were right. Everything you said about it in your advance notices of it are true. I've also taken the advice in FLASHES FROM READERS and have ordered my newsdealer to hold the copies for me.

But I'm afraid that that is not going to be a permanent solution. Because of the fact that the magazine has been getting better and better with each new issue, I think that I am going to be forced to subscribe to it, so that there is never a chance of missing out on my favorite fiction fare.

But I was going to tell you about my reactions to "Seven Faces." That dour Scotsman, *Angus Campbell,* and his saucy partner, *Patrick O'Rourke,* are just like old friends of mine. This new story promises to give them a man-sized mystery to follow, and it is written in the inimitable Brand fashion, with a touch of pathos and a touch of bathos and a really artistic delineation of character, all mixed up in a tight, convincing mystery story. I think it's swell!

Every other story in the magazine was a peach, too. "Me—Killer!" was certainly a yarn to get under a guy's hide. Franklin H. Martin's story, "Ex-Cop," was another unique bit of writing.

I think that DETECTIVE FICTION WEEKLY is easily tops in the detective story field, and I'm rooting for you.

Sincerely,

GEORGE ABBOTTS,
Wichita, Kansas.

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In all modesty, we were mightily pleased with this letter.

DEAR SIR:

I never thought it necessary to write to an editor before, but when a man has done a superlatively fine job—whatever it may be—he should be complimented for it.

I'm talking about the October 17th issue of DETECTIVE FICTION WEEKLY, in case this opening is cryptic.

Never in my experience as a reader—and I'm an indefatigable magazine devourer—has it been my luck to encounter a magazine which is filled with really outstanding stories from cover to cover. And that is what you have achieved with this particular issue.

I have been reading DFW for a goodly number of years, and of course, it has always been a leader in the field, but this time you have clearly outdone yourself. There was never a dull moment



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in the whole reading of the magazine, and that's something!

Yours truly,
SAMUEL WHITE, JR.,
Baltimore, Md.

## A comrade-in-arms for Mr. Gus Wertheimer!

DEAR SIR:

I don't know how big this Gus Wertheimer is, or anything about him. I don't know whether he's got the goods when it comes to meeting all comers, like he says, or not. But his sentiments strike me as being about right.

Now me, I'm six feet five and weigh two hundred and ninety pounds. I can bend ¼" iron bars and lift the front end of a good-sized auto. Whether Gus has the stuff or not, I have. And I'm ready to back every play he makes. He says DETECTIVE FICTION WEEKLY is the best magazine money can buy, and I say so, too.

It isn't so very far from Cleveland to Toledo, Gus. If you find any thick guy you can't convince, just let me know.

ARCHIBALD CZAIKOWSKI,
Cleveland, Ohio.

## A message from a Canadian gentleman.

DEAR SIR:

For quite a while I've wanted to write to give you my opinion regarding DFW, but I never could find time. But now here I am.

I've been reading DFW for many years and let me tell you that this is my idea of a magazine ng a commercial salesman. I cannot find any ter way to spend lonesome nights on the road. would find it quite hard to name any favorite hors, as I like every story. Only I would like know what happened to the *Patent Leather d.*

Well, here is hoping and wishing you will conue the good work.

Very truly yours,
J. A. MORIN,
Quebec, Canada.


CRYPTOGRAM FANS!

"Solving Cipher Secrets" is a fascinating word ime. Have you tried M. E. Ohaver's popular department in DETECTIVE FICTION WEEKLY? Mr. Ohaver has prepared a book full of advice and hints as to how to play the game. Experts will find the book invaluable. Novices will find it opens up entirely new angles. Get

"CRYPTOGRAM SOLVING"
By M. E. Ohaver

Send 25c to DETECTIVE FICTION WEEKLY
280 Broadway, New York City

Do You Want a WATCH or DIAMOND?

Thousands have found it easy to own America's finest diamond rings, watches, silverware or jewelry by the Santa Fe Plan. Bulova, Hamilton, or Elgin watches—brilliant blue-white diamonds—silverware from world-famous companies, and the great Santa Fe Specials—offered to you at startling cash prices on confidential liberal credit terms.

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DOWN GO TIRE PRICES
on GOODYEAR FIRESTONE-GOODRICH U. S. and other makes

$1.85 29x4.40-21 29x4.75-19

We will not be undersold. These low prices are unbeatable for Standard Tires repaired by our Improved Method and skilled workmen. Our 20 years' experience assures complete satisfaction. Buy now before prices advance. For a limited time get a Genuine RAY-O-VAC Lantern absolutely free with each order for 2 tires. Don't delay—order today!

BALLOON TIRES

| Size | Tires | Tubes |
|---|---|---|
| 29x4.40-21 | $1.85 | $0.85 |
| 29x4.50-20 | 1.85 | .85 |
| 30x4.50-21 | 1.95 | .85 |
| 28x4.75-19 | 1.85 | .95 |
| 29x4.75-20 | 2.10 | .95 |
| 29x5.00-19 | 2.25 | 1.05 |
| 30x5.00-20 | 2.40 | 1.05 |
| 5.25-17 | 2.45 | 1.15 |
| 28x5.25-18 | 2.45 | 1.15 |
| 29x5.25-19 | 2.45 | 1.15 |
| 30x5.25-20 | 2.50 | 1.15 |
| 31x5.25-21 | 2.80 | 1.15 |
| 5.50-17 | 2.75 | 1.15 |
| 28x5.50-18 | 2.75 | 1.15 |
| 29x5.50-19 | 2.75 | 1.15 |
| 6.00-17 | 2.85 | 1.15 |
| 30x6.00-18 | 2.85 | 1.15 |
| 31x6.00-19 | 2.85 | 1.15 |
| 32x6.00-20 | 2.95 | 1.25 |
| 33x6.00-21 | 3.10 | 1.25 |
| 32x6.50-20 | 3.20 | 1.35 |
| 6.00-16 | 3.15 | 1.45 |

TRUCK BALLOONS

| Size | Tires | Tubes |
|---|---|---|
| 6.00-20 | $3.10 | $1.65 |
| 6.50-20 | 3.35 | 1.95 |
| 7.00-20 | 4.60 | 2.95 |
| 7.50-20 | 5.15 | 3.75 |

HEAVY DUTY TRUCK TIRES

| Size | Tires | Tubes |
|---|---|---|
| 30x5 | $3.50 | $1.95 |
| 32x6 | 6.95 | 2.75 |
| 34x7 | 8.95 | 3.25 |
| 38x7 | 9.45 | 3.95 |
| 36x8 | 9.65 | 3.95 |
| 40x8 | 11.60 | 4.15 |

ALL OTHER SIZES
DEALERS WANTED

FREE! With Every 2 Tires ordered RAY-O-VAC LANTERN

Complete with batteries and newest type reflector bulb. Ready for instant use. Strong, steady light. Useful everywhere. Order now.

SEND ONLY $1.00 DEPOSIT on each tire ordered. ($2.00 on each Truck Tire.) Pay balance C. O. D. Deduct 5% if cash is sent in full with order. We may substitute brands if necessary, to ship promptly. ALL TUBES NEW—GUARANTEED. We agree to replace at half price any tire failing to give 9 months' service.

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# HAVE A NEW SKIN!

***Read this Free Offer*** **IN 3 DAYS**

—and learn that what was considered impossible before—the removal of pimples, blackheads, freckles, tan, oily skin, large pores, wrinkles and other defects in the outer skin—can now be done harmlessly and economically at home in three days' time, as stated by legions of men and women, young and old.

It is all explained in a new free treatise called

**"BEAUTIFUL NEW SKIN IN 3 DAYS"**

which is being mailed absolutely free to readers of this paper. So worry no more over your humiliating skin and complexion or signs of aging if your outer skin looks soiled and worn. Simply send your name and address to MARVO BEAUTY LABORATORIES, Dept. H-163, No. 1700 Broadway, New York, N. Y., and you will receive this new treatise by return mail in plain wrapper, postpaid and absolutely free. If pleased, tell friends.

**50c A WEEK**

Latest Popular Lady's Baguette Wrist Watch. Beautifully engraved and chased. Chromium finished link bracelet to match. Tested and regulated movement. Guaranteed accurate time-keeping and satisfactory service. Free material for two years. Exquisitely designed Lady's solitaire Ring. Beautifully fashioned. Set with a facet Simulated Diamond of dazzling radiance and blazing fire. Our simulated Diamonds are pure white, 24 facet, glitter with sparkling brilliancy and shining fire. You will be amazed with its similarity to a perfect cut, flawless, genuine diamond costing hundreds of dollars.

**To advertise our Simulated Diamond Rings, we include the above described Baguette Wrist Watch on each ring purchased from us and paid on our most liberal easy weekly payment plan.**

**SEND NO MONEY NOW** Just send name and address. No papers to sign, no reference required, no red tape. State size of ring or send a strip of paper for measure. On arrival pay postman $2.00 down. After that you send us 50c a week, full price only $9.95. The watch will not cost you anything extra on this offer. Act now! Rush order at once.

**FASHION JEWELRY CO.** 154 NASSAU ST. Dept. 158, NEW YORK

# FACTORY TO YOU

**LATEST MODEL REMINGTON TYPEWRITERS**

**10-Day Free Trial Offer**

**10¢ A DAY**

**BRAND NEW**, latest model Remington Portable for only 10¢ a day! Amazingly low price direct from the factory. Every essential feature of large office typewriters—standard 4-row keyboard, standard width carriage, margin release, back space, automatic ribbon reverse. Act now. Remington Rand, Inc., Dept. 145-11. 315 Fourth Ave., New York, N. Y.

# Prostate Sufferers

DR. W. D. SMITH INVENTOR

**An enlarged, inflamed or faulty Prostate Gland very often causes Lameback. Frequent Night Rising, Leg Pains, Pelvic Pains, Lost Vigor, Insomnia, etc. Many physicians endorse massage as a safe effective treatment. (See Reference Book of the Medical Sciences, Vol. VII, 3rd edition.) Use "PROSAGER," a new invention which enables any man to massage his Prostate Gland in the privacy of his home. It often brings relief with the first treatment and must help or it costs you nothing. No Drugs or Electricity.**

**FREE BOOKLET**

**EXPLAINS TRIAL OFFER. ADDRESS MIDWEST PRODUCTS CO., B-1411, KALAMAZOO, MICH.**

# COMING NEXT WEEK!

## THE MOGUL MURDERS

***A Smashing Novel of Murder in New York's Upper Underworld***

**By Fred MacIsaac**

SCREAMING headlines accused *Owen Porter*, wealthy playboy, of murder. All New York was eager to believe it — all except *Porter's* closest friend, who swore to balance the scales of justice!

## ODDS AGAINST THE CHAMPION

***A Strong Novelette***

**By Nels Leroy Jorgensen**

MURDER changes odds in the fight world!

**Stories by:**
**EDGAR FRANKLIN**
**HERMAN LANDON**
**and many others!**

**Detective Fiction Weekly**

***for MORE PAY learn***

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**ENGINEER DOBE, Div. 2838, Libertyville**

# NO JOKE TO BE DEAF

**—Every deaf person knows that** Mr. Way made himself hear his watch tick after being deaf for twenty-five years, with his Artificial Ear Drums. He wore them day and night. They stopped his head noises. They are invisible and comfortable, no wires or batteries. Write for TRUE STORY. Also booklet on Deafness.

*Artificial Ear Drum*

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726 Hofmann Bldg. Detroit, Michigan

# MOLES and WARTS

***removed from*** **face and body, safely, quickly, at home. No pain or blemish. No acid. FREE information. Write, NEFF LABORATORIES, Sta. E. 107, Toledo, Ohio.**




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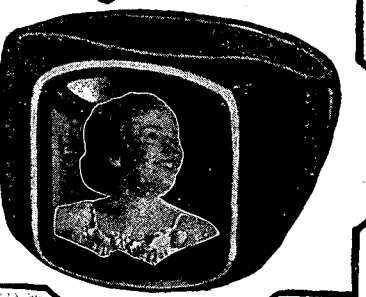
# The Money Making Marvel of the Age!

# PORTRAIT RING SELLS TO EVERYONE!

## NEW! NOVEL! SENSATIONAL!

### Pays a Golden Harvest of BIG CASH PROFITS To Men and Women!

It's here! The hottest, most sensational, most gripping selling idea of the age! THE PORTRAIT RING—the ring men and women everywhere, rich and poor, young and old want to wear and keep their whole lives long. Why? Because on this beautiful ring is permanently reproduced any photograph, snapshot or picture of some loved one. Yes—reproduced clearly and sharply and made part of the ring itself so it can't rub off, come off or fade off. This sensational new idea is making an unbelievable hit. Men and women—even those without an hour's selling experience — are taking dozens of orders a day and making dollars of profit by the handful. And now, in your territory, YOU can cash in big every day with this exciting sure-fire profit maker and earn money so easily it will seem more like play than work.



### BEAUTIFUL! PERMANENT! Portrait Ring Made from any Photo or Picture

For only $2.00 retail—look what you offer! A made-to-measure onyx-like ring adorned with the most precious setting in the world—a reproduction of the picture of a loved one. The ring itself can't tarnish. It will wear forever with ordinary care. The picture of the loved one is clearly, sharply reproduced with surprising faithfulness and becomes an inseparable part of the ring. It can't wear off, rub off, or fade off.

### Make Pockets Full of Dollars Just Wearing Ring!

Can you imagine a more novel, more unusual gift than the Portrait Ring? How can any man or woman find a more beautiful way to express loving sentiment than giving a wife, a child, a parent, a friend, a sweetheart a Portrait Ring with the donor's picture expertly reproduced! What a surprise! 10 orders a day is an easy goal—20 orders a day are not too much to expect. Only 10 orders a day pay you $60.00 a week clear profit!

### SELLS TO EVERYONE! A Treasured Remembrance Its Value Beyond Price

$1 • PROFIT FOR YOU ON EVERY RING!

Hundreds of customers write they wouldn't take a fortune for their rings if they couldn't get others. $5.00 and even $10.00 would be a small price for the PORTRAIT RING—but we have put a price of only $2.00 on it! Think of it—and here's the most astounding news of all—of this $2.00—YOU COLLECT IN ADVANCE AND KEEP $1.00 as your profit! Don't wait. Rush the coupon at once for the sample ring on our NO RISK plan and see for yourself what a whirlwind money maker this is for you. ACT RIGHT NOW!

We solicit foreign orders which should be accompanied by full remittance.

FATHER MOTHER BABY

YOUR RING SIZE: Wrap strip of paper around second joint of finger, trim so ends meet. Measure strip down from top on this chart. Number at end is your size.

### Order Your Sample Ring Now! You Don't Risk a Penny!

Never before has anything like this come your way. No competition from anyone—no looking for prospects (they are all around you)—no carrying a big stock or putting any money into goods. Simply showing your sample ring a few times a day, if you only start with your friends and neighbors, will be enough to give you an endless chain of orders. We cut away all red tape and are ready to send you a SAMPLE RING. The minute you take it out of its beautiful Gift Box you are ready to go after the orders. Rush the coupon below for YOUR sample ring NOW! That's all the outfit you need. It will do all your selling for you. And we make it easy for you to obtain this sample ABSOLUTELY FREE OF A PENNY COST under our liberal offer.

**SEND YOUR RING SIZE NOW**

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Cincinnati, Ohio

RING SIZE ....

Enclosed is photo. Please rush my individually made Portrait Ring and starting equipment. Will pay postman $1.00 plus few cents postage. It is understood that if I am not entirely satisfied I can return ring within 5 days and you will refund my money in full.
( ) Send full details only.

Name .....
Address .....
City ..... State .....

PORTRAIT RING CO.
DEPT. P-57 12 TH. & JACKSON STREET CINCINNATI OHIO

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# Stop Your Money Worries!

Bills nagging, comforts vanishing, funds slipping, the fingers of want reaching out for what little is left—*what a torture* when jobs are hard to get and a family must be kept alive!

Would you change the picture? Then look at the cheering prospect opened up by my generous offer to help you set up a respectable and profitable business of your own—finance your prosperous growing business *on my money—without you risking a penny of your money to start!*

There's no catch in this. It's an honest offer, made by a responsible manufacturer whose Route Dealers made *over one million dollars in profits* last year.

I am a manufacturer, nationally known, with a million-dollar plant. I need more Dealers at once to work in their own home territories. I offer this liberal money-making chance to earnest men and women who will set up Routes in familiar neighborhoods. When you become a Dealer, you are like an Independent Merchant. Other Dealers now making up to $60 and more in one week. You handle quality products in everyday use by all the family—a brand well-known the country over, but never sold in stores. You take orders at your convenience; light work; no experience necessary; no bulky equipment to carry; no store competition. *You begin earning at once—your first hour—no waiting, no delay!* Send for full details—ABSOLUTELY FREE.

What a delicious sense of security when you have your family provided for, money in hand and your future rosy. Not so much to ask, perhaps, but all too often denied.

It may seem "too good to be true" when I say my proposition has brought *prosperity* to many Dealers who work with me, but it is a *fact*. The chance I give those who coöperate and who pursue their opportunity faithfully, makes the way clear for *big cash returns for honest effort!*

You work for yourself. You have your own business, are your own boss, work as you like. Results are up to you.

It is into this prosperous family I invite the willing and ambitious. You, too, will have the most glorious opportunity of your life to make good. Find out more about my proposition. Lose no time. Mail the coupon right now—TODAY! All the facts are Free!

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**Rush Coupon—Send No Money**

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Without obligation to me, please send me FREE FACTS about money-making plan with which you help establish me in business for myself.

NAME .....

ADDRESS .....

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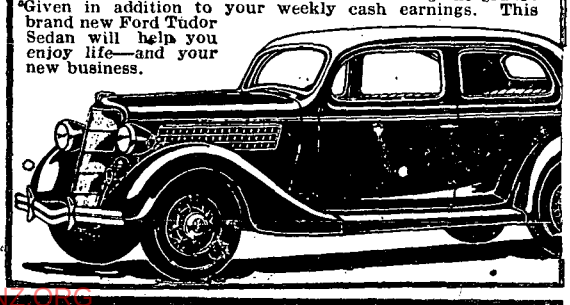
(Print or Write Plainly)

## Use a car like this

My free gift to Dealers as a bonus for making the grade! Given in addition to your weekly cash earnings. This brand new Ford Tudor Sedan will help you enjoy life—and your new business.



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